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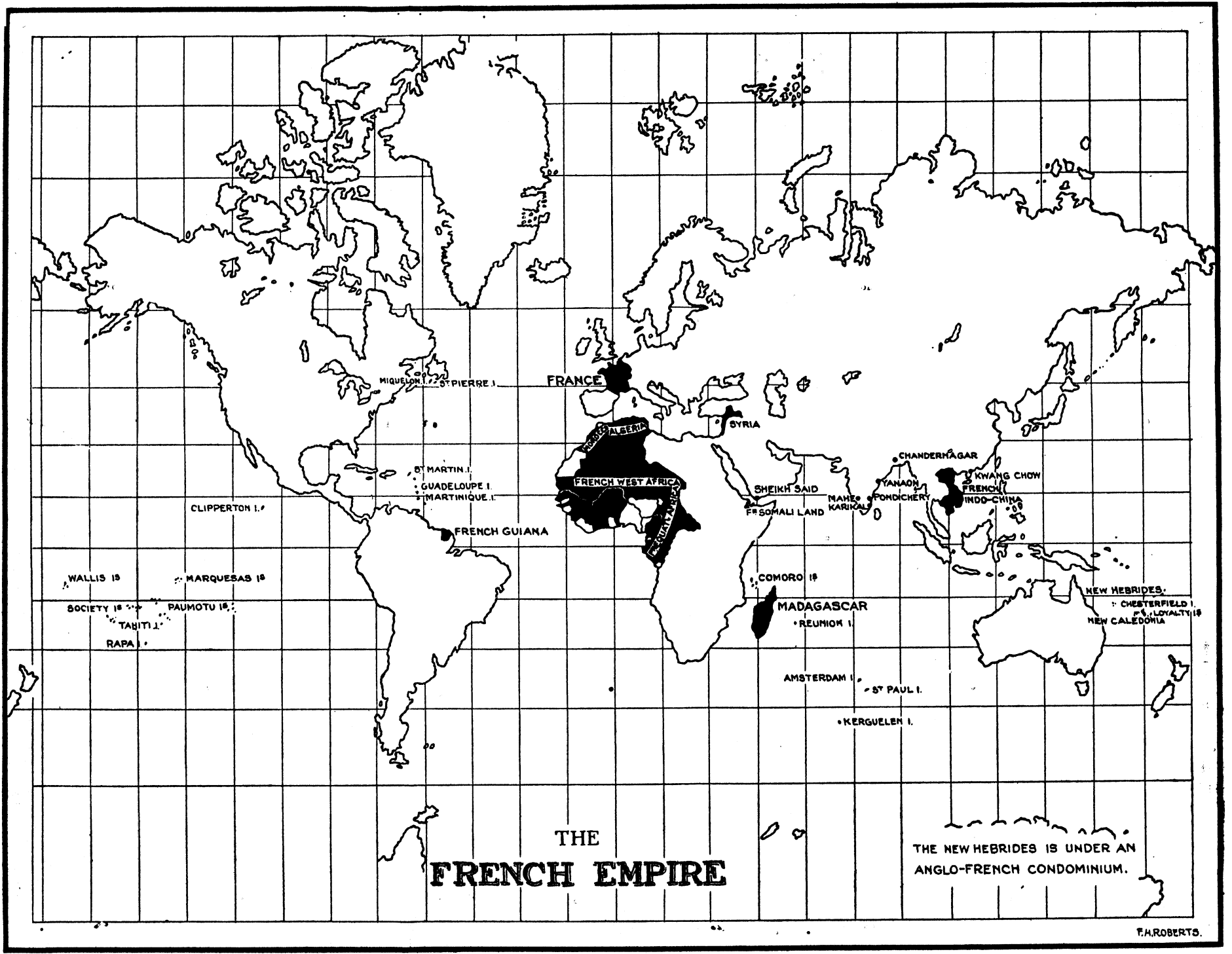
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**HISTORY OF  
FRENCH COLONIAL POLICY**

*This thesis has been approved for the degree of  
Doctor of Science (Economics) in the University  
of London.*





THE  
**FRENCH EMPIRE**

THE NEW HEBRIDES IS UNDER AN  
ANGLO-FRENCH CONDOMINIUM.



# HISTORY OF FRENCH COLONIAL POLICY (1870-1925)

BY

STEPHEN H. ROBERTS, M.A.

RESEARCH FELLOW, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Author of "History of Australian Land Settlement, 1788-1920" (1925);  
"Population Problems of the Pacific" (1927)

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To  
PROFESSOR ERNEST SCOTT

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## PREFACE

**T**HIS book is an attempt to cover an obvious gap in modern European history. It is strange that, despite the importance of the subject, nothing exists on it in English, even in the slightest form. My own connection with the topic goes back a long way. During earlier researches on the Pacific, and while still in Australia and the Pacific, I worked out French policy in that part of the world. From that, I went on to submit it as a doctoral thesis at the University of London, working both in London and in France. I am particularly indebted to the resources of the Paris Libraries and Government Departments, and to those persons in Marseilles who gave me much information on the mercantile aspect and the connection of the mainland with North Africa. By that time the theme had outgrown the original idea of a doctoral thesis, and assumed its present form.

It seems fitting at this stage to point out that the book does not pretend to be an interpretation based on actual colonial experience: it is a piece of historical research and analysis, the main colonial element coming from the fact that the author himself has lived for most of his life in a colony and thus has some capability of understanding the colonial point of view. It would be foolish to assume that actually living in the French colonies would not result in a more living presentation: but, on the other hand, one can write of the Middle Ages without having lived in them. Such a work as this has to be considered in light of what is claimed for it—and the claim is for historical presentation and comparative analysis rather than for a narration of personal colonial experience.

The book itself divides into two parts, each with a distinct approach. The raw material is contained within a regional survey, which takes each colony in turn and gives the full details of its particular history and position. As against this, are the chapters in which general principles are discussed and conclusions drawn—chapters in which some knowledge of the events dealt with is assumed. These include all of Part I,

and the long chapter on a comparison of French colonization with that of other Powers. In the first section, the aim is a succinct presentation of the relevant facts: in the second, the view-point is more consciously analytical and critical—and hence more or less personal. The writer asks for a more elastic acceptance of these critical chapters, because, being interpretative, they are open to conflicting conclusions. They are more constructive, less fixed, more suggestive; and nothing like finality or dogmatism is claimed for them—far less, indeed, than for the regional survey, and even there, the writer is conscious of the fluidity of his conclusions. As a whole, therefore, the book resolves itself into an academic and supposedly impartial presentation of the facts of fifty years of French colonization, and a discussion, avowedly influenced by the personality of the critic, of those facts and the theories behind them. One part is thus fixed, the other more elastic: and the reception of each should be tempered by a consideration of the different approach in each case.

The exigencies of a general plan demanded that the general sections should come first, in order to enable the reader to get some idea of the background. But this, in turn, necessitated writing of many facts and treating them as known to the reader, before they were fully explained. To have explained them all, as they occurred in the general section, would have taken away whatever clarity that section may possess: the reader is requested, therefore, should such a position arise, to refer to the index and the regional survey that follows. This particularly applies to much of the material in Part I—the theory. As this is in part a commentary on Part II—the practice—it is obvious that many points can only become clearer by reference to the succeeding part. This seemed preferable, however, to having Part II precede Part I, and to having a long regional survey tire the reader before any attempt was made to state the general theory. For a somewhat similar reason, the comparative chapter was isolated from the remainder of the general material and placed last—the general plan seemed to demand this.

With respect to the conclusions, it must be remembered that any conclusion about colonization remains somewhat in the nature of a hazard. The very nature of the problems dealt with makes this so. The author, therefore, accompanies his conclusions with the proviso that most of them are ten-

tative, and may be changed. All that can be said is that there is not the slightest conscious bias, either of approach or treatment: the writer had no preconceived ideas to warp his facts. Actually, there were constant changes. The analysis of Algeria was approached with much admiration for the French effort there, but the pressure of facts gradually forced the writer into a distinctly opposite position: and this happened frequently. It may be said that this particular conclusion is controversial, but the writer holds that it is a legitimate deduction from the facts, with no attempt to withhold or distort relevant matter. Beyond that one may not go, save to voice the opinions of a reader,—Can anyone say whether Algeria or any other colony has been a success or a failure? With deference, I should insist that there are relative successes and failures, and that these can be discerned—not absolutely, but in comparison with other efforts, either by France or other Powers. The conclusions given are thus only tentative and relevant: that is all that is claimed for them.

As is natural, my obligations are many. For my initial interest, I must thank Professor Ernest Scott, of the University of Melbourne, for still another of the innumerable things I owe to him: and for his help at every stage, even to wading through galley-proofs. In London, Professor Lilian Knowles found no trouble too great, even in her illness: and my debt to my supervisor, Professor Harold Laski, is difficult to acknowledge. His sympathetic understanding of things French and his critical analyses were available at every stage, perhaps more than he knew. My debt to him is very real and very appreciated. Acknowledgments of my obligations in Paris would be legion, for there were so many who made the work there so utterly enjoyable. The many librarians, both in London and Paris, I cannot particularize, as their aid was too spontaneous in every case. But I should like to mention the facilities provided by Mr. Evans Lewin at the Royal Colonial Institute, especially his periodicals; and the quiet atmosphere Dr. Meikle works up at the Institute of Historical Research. Finally comes a debt which is unique in its magnitude, to Mr. B. M. Headicar, the Librarian of the London School of Economics, who, once again, has taken off my hands all the business arrangements connected with a book. What this means to a person back again at the Antipodes will readily be recognized, especially when it is added that Mr. Headicar took

over every detail of its handling, even to arranging for the reading of the proofs. I simply cannot adequately express my indebtedness to him: a busy man, no amount of pestering seemed too great for him. For the large and troublesome task of reading the proofs I must thank Mr. W. H. Hosford.

I should like to add that I was back in Australia before this work reached proof-form, and hence was unable to supervise all of those details that arise in a book's last stages. Beyond seeing the galley-proofs and part of the page proofs, I played no part in presenting this book: such errors as there are, therefore, are due to circumstances, and neither to the author (who was away from the usual contacts) nor to those who so kindly arranged to see a strange manuscript through the Press, with the writer in a position where it took three months to consult him.

STEPHEN H. ROBERTS.

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE,  
AUSTRALIA.

*September 8th, 1928.*

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## LEADING EVENTS IN FRENCH COLONIZATION

1830. Conquest of Algeria.
1841. Bugeaud in Algeria: schemes of military colonization.
1843. Protectorate over Tahiti.
1844. *Bureaux Arabes* set up in Algeria.
1848. Slavery abolished in the Antilles: franchise given to the negroes.
1849. Libreville (French Congo) founded.  
Colonial banks set up in the sugar-islands.
1852. Move to South Algeria.
1853. New Caledonia annexed.
1854. Faidherbe commenced to reorganize the Senegal.
1857. Kabylia conquered (Algeria).
1860. France obtains four provinces of Cochin-China.
1863. Napoleon III's policy of "an Arab Kingdom."  
Protectorate over Cambodia.
1867. Three more provinces of Cochin-China occupied.  
Doudart de Lagrée explores the Mekong to Yunnan.
1869. Imperial Commission on Algerian affairs (Béhic's).
1871. The Third Republic.  
Civil Government-General set up in Algeria.  
Insurrection in Algeria.  
Scheme to settle Alsatians in Algeria.
1874. Protectorate over Annam.
1875. De Brazza's expeditions started in Congo.
1876. March to Niger started in West Africa.
1878. Heyday of "official colonization" in Algeria.
1879. Civil government *really* started in Algeria (as against the nominal change of 1871).  
"Rattachements" to Paris started in Algeria.
1880. Anti-colonialism at its height in France.
1881. Start of the Ferry fights for the colonies.  
Conquest of Tunisia (Treaty of Bardo).
1882. Commencement of the occupation of the Congo interior.
1883. Fall of Bamako (Niger): forward-policy sets in in earnest.  
Stronger protectorate set up over Annam.  
Commencement of the war in Tonkin.

1885. Conference of Berlin.  
 Protectorate over Madagascar.  
 Fall of Ferry on the Tonkin question.  
 Peace in Tonkin: Paul Bert organizes the land.
1887. Binger's expedition to the Niger bend.  
 Anglo-French Convention for the New Hebrides.
1889. Colonial Congress strongly favours assimilation.
1890. Commencement of the period of military expansion.
1891. "Comité de l'Afrique Française" formed.
1892. Senatorial Commission on Algeria (the most important in French colonization).  
 Law of tariff-assimilation passed.  
 Conquest of Dahomey.
1893. Occupation of Timbuktu.
1894. Ministry of the Colonies created.
1895. Penetration of the Sahara resumed (abandoned since 1881).  
 Formation of the Government-General of West Africa.  
 Occupation of Madagascar.
1896. Madagascar annexed.  
 Abolition of *rattachements* in Algeria.
1897. Paul Doumer reorganizes Indo-China.
1898. Marchand and Kitchener meet at Fashoda (Nile).  
 Commission of Concessions set up (i.e., start of the Congo rush).  
*Délégations Financières* instituted in Algeria.
1900. Fourreau-Lamy Mission across the Sahara to the Chad.  
 Junction of missions from West, Equatorial, and North Africa at the Chad to overthrow Rabah.  
*Law of budgetary-autonomy passed, for the colonies.*
1903. Conquest of Mauretania.
1905. Commencement of period of drift in colonial policy (1905-1914).  
 Outcry regarding the French Congo.
1906. Decrees reorganizing the French Congo.  
 Colonial Conference opposes assimilation in all its branches.  
 Conference of Algeciras on Morocco.  
 Occupation of Shawia (Morocco).  
 Anglo-French Condominium over the New Hebrides.
1907. Commencement of the pacification of Wadai.
1909. Messimy attacks colonial system in his budget.
1910. Commencement of the idea of "the black army."
1911. Viollette's attacks on the colonial system in the budget-report.  
 Part of the French Congo ceded to Germany.  
 Colonial decentralization started.
1912. Conquest of Morocco.  
 Troubles in Tunisia.

1913. Conscription applied to the Algerian natives.
1914. Outbreak of war: Togo and the Cameroons occupied.
1917. First Colonial Conference (Maginot's).
1918. Flandin interpellation on colonial production (Senate).
1919. Naturalization law for the Algerian natives.  
*Destour* (separatist) movement in Tunisia.
1920. Monetary crisis in Indo-China.  
*Conseil Supérieur des Colonies* reorganized.  
Agency-General of the Colonies set up in Paris.
1921. First Parliamentary Commissions exclusively for colonial matters.  
Sarraut's scheme for a general *mise en valeur*.  
Projects to irrigate the Niger Valley.  
Syria occupied.
1922. Tunisian council-scheme.
1924. *Délégations Financières* instituted in Madagascar.  
Councils of Native Notables allowed in West Africa.  
Colonies recovering from post-war crisis.
1925. Crisis in Morocco and Syria.

## POSITION OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE

When acquired.	Area (sq. kms.).	Population (1921 Census).	Imports (frs.). <sup>1</sup>	Exports (frs.). <sup>1</sup>
Algeria, 1830 . . . . .	575,388	5,806,090	3,361,851,000	1,597,975,000
Tunisia, 1881 . . . . .	125,130	2,093,939	635,562,552	337,057,488
Morocco, 1912 . . . . .	600,000	5,400,000	1,000,474,464	268,875,057
West Africa, 1817 . . . . .	4,665,000	12,238,216	395,277,123	410,000,000
Equatorial Africa, 1882 . . . . .	2,687,190	5,860,868	75,091,230	43,361,565
Madagascar, 1896 . . . . .	582,180	3,382,161	225,921,048	108,308,097
Indo-China, 1860 . . . . .	710,842	18,983,203	1,075,930,000	1,478,470,000
Somali Coast . . . . .	120,000	64,794	129,618,863	109,361,080
Réunion . . . . .	2,500	172,190	71,269,455	78,654,501
French India . . . . .	515	269,579	23,583,192	24,554,280
St. Pierre	240	3,918	22,988,803	19,690,756
Martinique	985	244,439	84,508,370	89,110,544
Guadeloupe	1,780	229,839	78,989,677	74,610,693
Guiana	90,000	44,202	34,849,160	36,445,867
New Caledonia, 1853 . . . . .	20,000	47,505	48,564,425	27,676,379
Tahiti, 1843 . . . . .	3,060	31,901	14,401,153	24,360,901
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>10,184,810</b>	<b>55,272,844</b>	<b>7,278,880,515</b>	<b>4,728,492,208</b>

<sup>1</sup> NOTE.—These trade-figures are for 1921 and for North Africa, 1920, because those were the years taken by M. Albert Sarraut as his basis for the post-war *mise en valeur*. Later figures will be found in the text. In the years above-quoted, the average value of the franc was 50 (1920) and 62·5 (1921). A detailed analysis of the trade for these years will be found in the appendix to this work. Graphs to show the position at various dates are on Map 2.

PART I  
FRENCH COLONIAL POLICY IN  
THEORY



## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL COLONIAL POLICY

WHEN the question of colonization arose in the nineteenth century, France had a tradition and a legacy with which to face it. The tradition was that of the first overseas Empire and of the long combat with England for primacy in the New World. Colbert, Frontenac, La Salle, d'Iberville, Martin, Dupleix—the names unrolled themselves in a mist of adventurous memory, and few thought of Law, or the hide-bound *Intendants*, or the way in which the French at home had deliberately dissipated the colonial gains. The tradition was rather a rose-coloured view of the grandiose schemes of the past,—of Dupleix's essentially Latin diplomacy, of the line of forts to hem in the English settlements to the Atlantic seaboard, of Jolliet and Marquette pushing down the great Mississippi water, of the huge Louisiana scheme which would have written "Closed" on the English chapter in America, of the empire of the Antilles that was as rich as the Dutch spice-islands, and of the grip of the barques and caravels of Dieppe on the lucrative African trade. These were the very stuff of romance,—tales of "the days when the world was wide," and when the French adventurer was a mixture of François Villon and a Jesuit father, a compound of adventurous *bonhomie* and mystic faith. Shrinking from the parochialism of the restored Bourbons and the Monarchy of July, France dreamed of the past.

This was especially the case when the peace of 1816 finally wrested most of the Empire from French hands. The Empire which had been at its zenith under Louis XIV had gone bit by bit. France had died of a virtual suicide in India, of inanition in Canada, and, in the rest of North America, from blindly refusing to face the facts of Colbert's riparian policy in Louisiana. The Seven Years' War had been the turning-point: it definitely ended the French dreams of a new Empire beyond Europe; and, from then until the conquest of Algeria, the country spoke of departed glories. History under these conditions was at once a grievance and an outlet for repressed romantic instincts. The Frenchman liked to dream, and liked to intensify his dreams by the sense of injustice under which he laboured. Hence the strength of the tradition; hence

the curiously poignant way in which this colonial question was regarded. It was on a plane of emotional intensity unknown in the England of that time ; it was a living passion, because nowhere is a tradition created as quickly as in France, and nowhere does national self-delusion on any desired theory reach such an intensity.

The tradition left over from the First Empire was thus partly a vision, partly a crystallization of the nation's wrongs. But the actual legacy was of a different kind. Here the French were on firm foundations. In the first place, they received from the First Empire certain principles and methods of colonization that were deemed to be ingrained in the French spirit and that formed part and parcel of every colonial scheme in which France has dabbled. It was never doubted, for instance, that colonization, in some vaguely metaphysical way, was an especial attribute of the French nation. "Our race is expansive," cried Louis Madelin,<sup>1</sup> and this was unhesitatingly accepted as a principle of 1789, even by those who, for economic or political reasons, would have limited colonization in practice. Expansiveness was a natural Gallican attribute : so too was the manner of that expansion,—and here we get to the root of the influence of the First Empire. This Empire bequeathed to nineteenth-century France its colonial creed,—a creed summed up in the twin dogmas of assimilation and the *Pacte Colonial*. In the same unquestioning kind of way in which they accepted the Gallican capability of colonization, the French accepted the method. Expansion was to be the expansion of France, of French civilization, of French ideas, for how could it be otherwise ? Was not colonization national proselytism ? What better fate for the Indians of Canada than to be administered under the Paris code and the details of French law ? Were not French institutions and the sacred principles of 1789 a goal greatly to be desired for races that had not progressed so far ? And was it not as logical as it was desirable that the tiniest embellishment of French civilization should be transferred to the newest settlement ? The French flag meant France ; France meant the apex of civilization ; and the duty of a civilizing nation was to proselytize. For what otherwise would be the significance of the phrase with which France described her colonies, "*La France outremer*" ? Assimilation *à outrance* was thus the most striking legacy which the first colonial Empire left to the second. Preaching abstract logic and the universalism of the *minutiae* of French life, it cast all French colonialism into a preordained mould, thus making development synonymous with artificial growth along certain prescribed lines. Assimilation in politics and law, the subordination of the *Pacte Colonial* in economics—that was the well-defined theory of the First Empire ; and it was as clearly the

<sup>1</sup> L. Madelin, *L'Expansion Française* (1918), p. 5.

theory on which the new Empire was raised, at least until 1910. Indeed, theory to the contrary, these ideas permeate many parts, if not the whole, of French colonial life even to-day.

With this went the second legacy, which can only be explained by that partial logicity which makes the Frenchman, while pledging his troth unreservedly to logic, so utterly illogical. This was a spirit of opposition to all colonization. The philosophers set the tone, and others followed without thinking, so that anti-colonialism became almost a cult in France, and one so deeply implanted that, despite utterly changed conditions, it has not yet been eradicated and is still one of the gravest menaces to the effective development of the French Empire. Voltaire commenced the attack, a line in his *Candide* containing the catchword that French Canada was only "a few acres of snow,"<sup>2</sup> not worth troubling about. Then Rousseau's humanitarianism was invoked to identify colonization with exploitation, and France was intrigued with the idyllic state of native bliss described or invented by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Literature and philosophy were practically unanimous: and the economists, confined to the localist land-emphasis of the Physiocrats, supported them, with the exception of Quesnay and his school. There was thus a solid phalanx of anti-colonial influences in eighteenth-century France. Nor did the Revolutionary philosophers change this trend: rather did they intensify it, crying aloud with Robespierre<sup>3</sup> for the death of the colonies on the slightest pretext. Stray voices like that of Barrère urging the dependence of commerce on colonization went unheeded, and, on the whole, the attitude of Voltaire, strengthened as it was by the test of 1789, became stereotyped as the only logical and therefore orthodox opinion. Anti-colonialism came thus to be deemed not only logical and philosophical, but so obvious that the very questioning of its veracity was almost tantamount to treason to the principles of the Republic. A cause that had commenced by being logical was now based on emotion, and deemed to be so palpably clear as to admit of no cavil.

Unfortunately, Napoleon did little to clear this situation: he was too busy to devote adequate attention to the colonial problem, and his chief evolutionary importance in this regard was to crush the administrative and commercial liberty conferred on the colonies by the Revolution.<sup>4</sup> Then, after him, the restored Bourbons were not merely apathetic, but clearly opposed to colonial ventures, and, from 1815 to 1830, France was virtually without colonies.

<sup>2</sup> This much-disputed line really occurs in *Candide*, c. 23.

<sup>3</sup> For the actual significance of this attack (or its insignificance), see the note in Girault, 4th edition, Vol. I (1921), p. 227.

<sup>4</sup> G. Roloff, *Die Kolonialpolitik Napoleon I* (1899), or L. Deschamps, *Histoire de la Question Coloniale en France* (1891), p. 348 et seq.

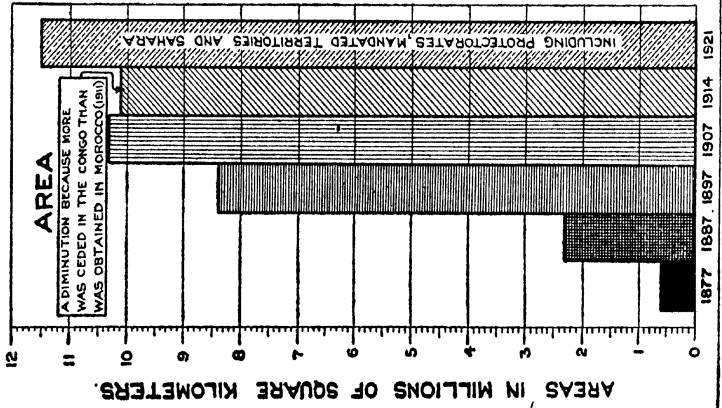
Nor did the occupation of a few coastal-posts in Algeria in 1830 lead to a changed outlook, for the dissensions caused by the annexation, and the failures of the first few decades, intensified the feeling of opposition to the colonies *per se*. France went to Algeria partly to provide some other scope than political agitation for the nation's energies, partly to restore French credit abroad, and partly to annoy England.<sup>5</sup> And she stayed there primarily because she could not evacuate and save her face, but largely because of a kind of inevitable but unwanted fatalism. For years, no decision was taken between the ideas of evacuation or limited conquest or complete occupation: France simply stood still, colonial unpopularity increasing the while. The only partisans of the colonial cause were the Midi deputies who wanted commercial expansion, the strategists who dreamed of the Mediterranean as "a French lake," and the patriots who prated of "*la gloire*." But these were in a decided minority, and, up to 1840, Parliament followed the "Agrarians," the successors of the Physiocrats, in systematically opposing colonial development. Not one economist declared in favour of colonization, except Sismondi, and his protests were unheard during the triumph of J. B. Say.<sup>6</sup> And a flippant *mot* completed the victory of the non-expansionists—that "Algeria is a rock without water, a place where only air is found, and even that is bad!"

It was little wonder, then, that there was an almost completely sterile period in the history of French colonization up to 1870; and the attitude towards Algeria (which was limited to the coastal-fringe north of Kabylie), merely proved the case. The "old colonies," dismembered fragments of the first colonial Empire, were stagnant and crushed under Napoleon's *régime* of excessive centralization, and were under naval martinets appointed by the Ministry of the Marine. The three privileged islands (Martinique, Guadeloupe and Réunion), it is true, were under "the *régime* of law," but, even in their case, the colonial assemblies had practically no power, and all administrative and financial matters were administered by and from Paris. All alike were under the *Pacte Colonial*, the analogue to the Navigation Acts of England, which had been re-established in 1802. These restrictions were supposed to go with the triumph of free-trade in France in 1861, but really, "she abolished all that was unfavourable to herself, all that favoured the colonies." Even the reform of 1866, giving the colonial councils-general the right to impose tariffs, was conceded only to Algeria and the three privileged sugar-

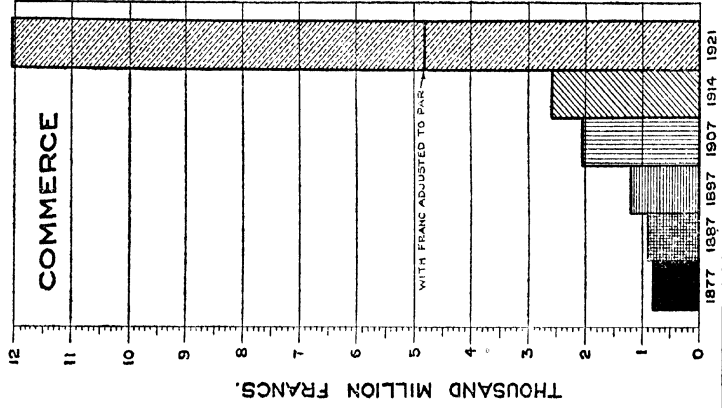
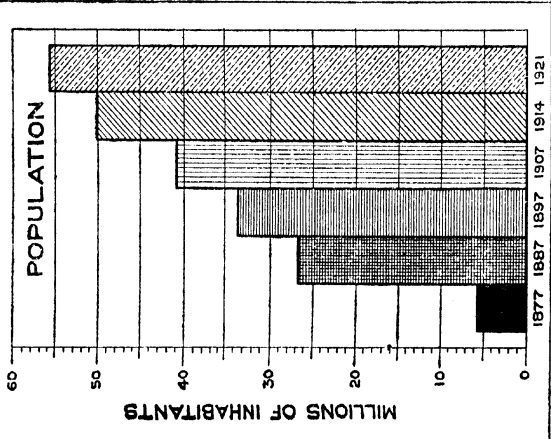
<sup>5</sup> R. Valet, *L'Afrique du Nord devant le Parlement au XXme Siècle* (1924), p. 18 *et seq.*; M. Wahl, *L'Algérie* (5th edition, 1897), pp. 115-116.

<sup>6</sup> J. B. Say, *Traité d'Economie Politique* (1828), chaps. 6 and 22 of *Cours d'Economie Publique*.

# THE GROWTH OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE



1877 - BEFORE COMMENCEMENT OF EXPANSION.  
 1887 - AFTER FERRY'S FORWARD POLICY.  
 1897 - AFTER EXPANSION IN NORTH AFRICA & MADAGASCAR  
 1907 - PERIOD OF ANTI-COLONIALISM.  
 1914 - AT COMMENCEMENT OF WAR.  
 1921 - POST-WAR.



islands, and was at once regretted. On the whole, the governing principle was still the subordination of the colonies to the mother country.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, the groping experiments of the sixties, ill-defined and almost annulled as they were, had some results; and, by 1870, it was vaguely realized that some benefits might accrue to all from the development of the colonies. The new free-trade policy of France, especially after the 1860 treaties, powerfully aided this idea; and, however much the actual application of the reforms might be retarded, the very promulgation of the schemes of 1861 and 1866 anticipated the decline, the disappearance even, of the old *Pacte Colonial*. Up till then, colonists had been forbidden to buy foreign manufactured goods, or to sell their goods in foreign markets; but, in theory at least, these restrictions no longer held. It was for the new Republican government of 1871 either to make the facts conform to theory or to restore the old position.<sup>8</sup>

In 1871, the French colonies were weak and scattered units, and opinion regarding them frankly hostile, although to some extent leavened by the reform-spirit of the preceding decade.<sup>9</sup> In all, the Empire included less than a million square kilometres and five million people, and most of these were in Algeria. Even there, the boundary was uncertain; effective occupation had only gone as far as the Mitidja plain; the whole land was threatened by a revolt of Islam; and exploitation had scarcely commenced. There were certain scattered territories in the Senegal basin, but, although Faidherbe had pacified the coastal regions, the Senegal River was not yet reached. The Ivory Coast was not thought of, and a few trading-posts dragged along the steam-baked coast of Guinea and the Congo. Outside of Africa were the "old colonies," a few sugar-islands which were the prey of a labour-shortage and the competition of beet-sugar. Then there were the fragments of St. Pierre et Miquelon, a group of islands off the coast of Newfoundland; an unexplored piece of Guiana which seemed only useful as an alternative to the guillotine in getting rid of undesirables; five towns in India; the undeveloped New Caledonia and Tahiti in the Pacific, Cytherean countries which were useful for exiling the most incompetent officials; and a small hold, of a vague extent and a still vaguer security, on Cochin-China and the Mekong valley. Not one unit in this disconnected *congeries* was prospering; the tradê of Cochin-China, it is true, was developing, but in foreign hands: the other colonies were either, like the Pacific islands, in a trance of inertia, or, like the sugar-colonies, rapidly declining. Their total

<sup>7</sup> L. Deschamps, *Histoire de la Question Coloniale en France* (1891), p. 372 et seq.

<sup>8</sup> Camille Guy, in *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, April, 1900, pp. 393-394.

<sup>9</sup> *Revue des Colonies et des Questions Coloniales*, No. 4, 1914, article on "Nos Colonies en 1870."

commerce amounted only to 600 million francs a year, and of this a third was in foreign hands. Yet for this privilege, France paid 30 million francs, Algeria alone receiving an annual subsidy of 22 millions! Colonization thus seemed a particularly onerous form of bounty on industry, and it was little wonder that the public viewed the colonies through the eyes of the recent Mexican catastrophe, and would readily have accepted the abandonment of all colonial ventures, had that been possible.

Under these conditions, the anti-colonial feeling in France could be easily explained. This positive revulsion has been the most important feature of French colonization; without it, the history of French expansion in the last fifty years is meaningless, for it was felt in every colony. It is the thread of unity running through the whole, and practically all events connected with colonization may be explained by it. Indeed, it is difficult nowadays to conceive the bitterness and the emotional intensity of this feeling, because colonies have never evoked in England, even in the thirties and at the time of Gladstone's "Great Betrayal" of the Transvaal, such a concerted *furor* of opposition as they have in France since 1870. The feeling has been almost a passion, and moments have not been lacking when to advocate colonization almost branded one as a traitor. Nor was it, as in England, a party matter. Liberal parochialism can explain the English ban on forward policies in the seventies, but no similar explanation on a party basis would be applicable in the case of France. There, the opposition was national, and supported by the same intensity, the same excessive passion, which France brought to the question of the Rhine. Indeed, the two issues were closely connected: an expansionist was a traitor to France on the Rhine, and the patriots wishing to reserve every ounce of France's power for Continental schemes, opposed all colonies. Practically Jules Ferry alone, and later, the military expansionists, stood aloof from the general condemnation; the consensus of opinion on the matter was literally amazing, and there was not a single colony but suffered from it.

Louis Philippe's old fight for Algeria now became almost insignificant as compared with the struggles for Tunisia and Tonkin. France delayed from 1862 to 1885 in taking Tonkin, and Dupré and Garnier, the leaders, expected repudiation and disgrace even in the case of their success. They staked their lives against failure, and, it would seem, their careers against success. Tunisia was given to France by Ferry against the country's wish, and he twice fell for the sake of the colonies. His forward policy in Tunisia led to the fall of his first ministry (November, 1881), while his Tonkin policy literally hurled his second from power (March, 1885). "The doctrine of effacement," as it was called, was in the ascendant, and Clemenceau's fervid oratory rode roughshod over the

more reasonable but less vehement advocates of colonization. Egypt was abandoned to England in 1882: for almost twenty years, Wargla and Tuggurt marked the limit imposed on Algerian expansion at the edge of the desert: and there was a standstill in West Africa until the move against Bamako in 1893. All through the eighties and well on into the next decade, this feeling lasted and even grew stronger, although the unrestrained ebullience of 1884, when the issue was given over to the crowd-psychology of the mobs swarming into the precincts of Parliament, could not last.<sup>10</sup> Still, the Tonkin disgust remained in the air, and he who advocated colonization automatically become a political outcast, either so obtuse that he could not perceive facts, or so idealistic that he would lose himself in a world of desire, and in either case, according to the prevalent opinion, incapable of deciding France's destinies. Under these conditions, a speech on colonization came to be either a sign of bravado or a method of intimating that political advancement had no charm for the speaker! No ambitious politician could afford to ally himself to the colonial cause, and not many men had the disinterested pertinacity of a Ferry.

By 1891, thought on the colonies had narrowed down to attacks on Tonkin and the Sudan, both of which were taken as apt illustrations of the results of colonization. The commercial crises in the former, and the deficits and constant wars in the latter, had disgusted the French anew with colonies, and keen opposition was manifested to the inevitable movements back from the coast which were then looming into prominence. Four years later, Madagascar shared similar criticisms and was hampered by similar half-policies which were far worse for all concerned than a complete abstention. Then, when the pressure of events made an onward move in North Africa inevitable, the country still stood aloof and condemnatory.<sup>11</sup> Individuals acted as individuals, suffering both in the case of success and failure; and, even when the facts of the situation made the policy of frank obstruction no longer tenable, there still remained a negative and inert hostility. Thus, the conquest of Mauritania and Wadai in 1909 was practically concealed from the public, for colonial expansion was still looked on as something like a rash,—annoying, if no longer positively dangerous.<sup>12</sup> Even the penetration of Morocco was practically prevented until 1912 by similar attitudes, and hampered even after that.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, as Gautier sums up, "there has never been

<sup>10</sup> Deschamps (1891), *op. cit.*, pp. xiii-xiv.

<sup>11</sup> Long debate in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 3/7/00, opposing the occupation of Tuat.

<sup>12</sup> Interpellation in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 24-25/12/10, and Morel's reply.

<sup>13</sup> Compare the Jaurès interpellation in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 17/6/11, or Senate, 15/6/11.

an epoch or a country more profoundly indifferent to distant adventures" than the third French Republic, and, by a curious paradox, "the country sees its aversion for colonies and its overseas Empire grow at the same time, by a parallel progression."<sup>14</sup> Hence arises the curious fact that the most marked tendency in the history of French colonial expansion has clearly been a profound anti-colonialism.

The fact of the existence of this tendency is undoubted: its explanation is a more difficult matter, because the explanations fall short of explaining the high pitch of the opposition and the *furor* of bitterness directed against the colonies. Apathy could be understood, what baffles analysis is the direct and positive anathema, especially when the economic considerations after 1900 all pointed directly to the contrary. The trouble was that the colonial question was viewed as indissolubly linked up with the recovery of the lost Rhine provinces: in fact, as has been pointed out, it was deemed to be part of the same problem and to know no separate existence, and indeed this attitude still unconsciously colours much discussion of colonial activities in France. The Treaty of Frankfurt naturally kept French activities in a Continental groove, and, as colonies were supposed to dissipate rather than increase the country's resources, anyone wanting expansion was viewed as Germanophile. From this point of view, then, any wastage of economic resources or man-power in distant colonial ventures, perhaps on a par with the Mexican expedition or Napoleon III's scheme for an Arab kingdom, would not only be ill-advised, but tantamount to high-treason. It was treachery to advocate colonization. Gambetta spoke of "the road of revenge," conscripts sang Déroulède's *Chants du Soldat*, and Clemenceau, with a charming lack of humour, denounced colonialism as "only a policy of national chauvinism."<sup>15</sup> *Revanche* was the keynote of the seventies, and, for the colonies, to use the catchword of the day, this meant *recueillement* or withdrawal.<sup>16</sup> A pursual of both ends simultaneously was not deemed possible, and, if there had to be a choice between them, why, argued the Frenchman, past history, the existing position of France, and the dubious nature of the advantages promised by the Ferry school all pointed in the same direction. "You will end by making me think you prefer Alsace-Lorraine to France. Must we hypnotize ourselves with the lost provinces, and should we not take compensations elsewhere?" protested Ferry to Déroulède, perhaps the most bitter of the Continentalists. "That is just the point," retorted

<sup>14</sup> E. F. Gautier, *La Conquête du Sahara* (3rd edition, 1922), p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 1/11/83.

<sup>16</sup> Valet (1924), *op. cit.*, p. 232; J. Despagne, *La Diplomatie de la Troisième République et le Droit des Gens* (1904), p. 120.

the fiery poet, admirably expressing French opinion. "I have lost two children, and you offer me twenty domestics!"<sup>17</sup> Clearly, with such a frame of mind in the ascendant, colonization was a closed book. France, in the seventies and eighties, was thus suffering from acute national myopia, and, seeing only the "blue line of the Vosges," was blind to the world-movements that were transforming the position of the colonies, both economically and politically. *Revanche*, however logical in 1871, was no longer so pertinent to the position of 1881, and, at the later stage, lacked in reason what it had in emotion.

A second reason for the ban on colonization was the reaction against the high-flown ventures of the Second Empire. "The Empire has satiated the country with adventures," complained Ferry,<sup>18</sup> and Tonkin and Tunis sounded as badly in French ears as Mexico or Sebastopol. France could see no economic or political gains to be obtained from colonization, and the quest of "glory" alone had palled. The people wanted a steady internal development, concentrating power and strength for the Rhine-fight alone, but above all building up national prosperity again, on an industrial basis.

This tendency, coinciding as it did with the popular psychology of the time, was supported by the economists. Say, Molinari, de Laveleye,—in short, every economist of note except Leroy-Beaulieu, agreed on this point,—that colonization was an unjustifiable expense, a burden for future and present alike. "A great colonial development is a luxury, the costly fantasy of a great nation," the Duc de Broglie told the Senate in 1884, and unless the country was overflowing with prosperity would ruin both colony and mother-country. The *Journal des Economistes*, under Frederick Passy, showed how much of an economic blunder such dispersion of an ordinary nation's wealth was, and how little return could be hoped for. Then, the left benches, the Socialists, added the loud weight of their opposition, making colonization a crime against the liberty of mankind as well as an attribute of the moderates, and thus doubly damned. So that there was a practical uniformity on this question, although for various reasons. But, whatever the reason, most people thought that colonies were expensive, useless, unproductive, directly weakening, and somewhat immoral, and, all in all, if good at all, operated on the colonizing nation like drugs on an individual,—for the passing zest, payment had to be made by an ultimate disintegration.

Such a feeling, however, could not be uninfluenced by, even should it resist, the world-changes of the eighties; and gradually, although the general outlook towards the colonies continued to be as antagonistic as

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in G. P. Gooch, *Franco-German Relations, 1871-1914* (1923), p. 21.

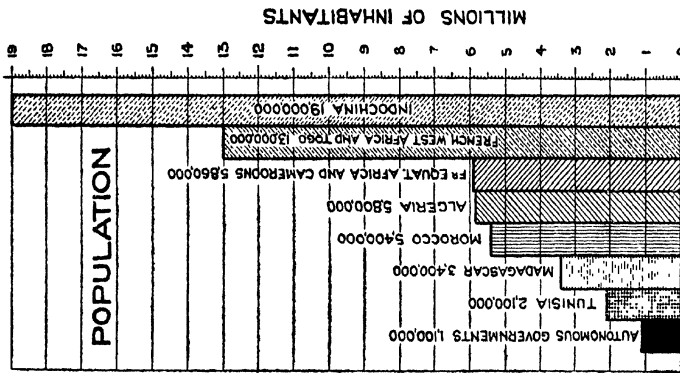
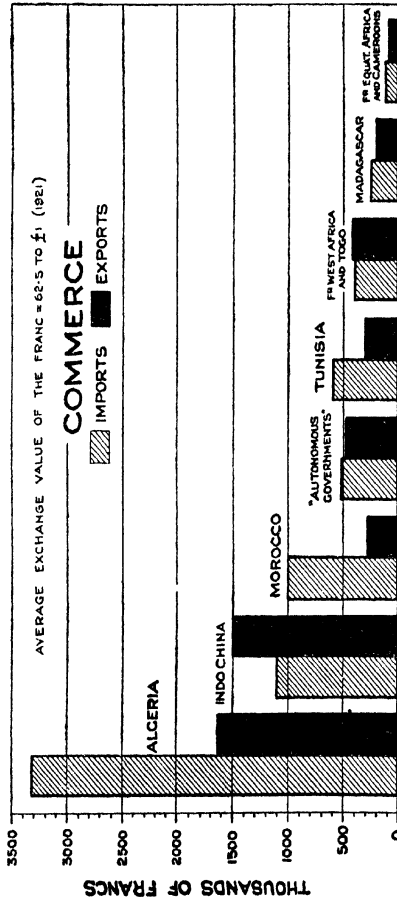
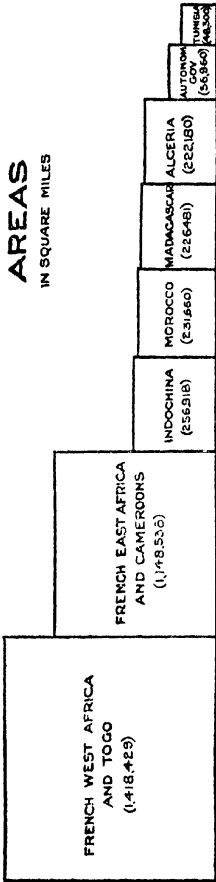
<sup>18</sup> J. Ferry, *Les Affaires de Tunisie* (2nd edition, 1882), p. 3.

ever, a more comprehensive attitude was forced on the country, as a result of which expansion came to be tolerated even if still viewed as undesirable. The rule remained the same: but exceptions were permitted. The change to this attitude was the work of Jules Ferry, "Ferry the Tonkinese," "Ferry the Traitor," who was sacrificed, even to the extent of his life, before the prevailing anti-colonial monomania. If the modern French Empire can be said to have been the work of any one man, that man is surely Jules Ferry. A grave and somewhat cold Lorrainer, he was a fighter all his life. Solid, stoical, reserved, he stood for moral force and for a methodical obstinacy in fighting through to his ends. He was never a showy orator like his rival Gambetta, that gesticulating Meridional who always had his heart in his hands. In short, he was as much a man of the Assembly as Gambetta was a mover of the crowds.<sup>19</sup> Ferry stood coldly aloof from attacks of Press and people and politicians, and simply continued his work. All the time he was opposed: papers and mobs alike condemned him for betraying France to Germany, and for weakening the frontier by taking men to fight Asiatics and Africans in distant colonial ventures. The Chamber of Deputies was constantly fluctuating, more often than not against him, and he had an enemy in the President, Jules Grévy, who was openly opposed to all colonial, and even diplomatic, movements. In Parliament, practically every outstanding figure of the day ridiculed him and his cause, and even Gambetta's allegiance was unstable, being rather to pave a way for himself than to help Ferry. The Monarchists naturally held aloof; Clemenceau preached the old "doctrine of effacement" and the Continental view-point for the Socialists; Joseph Fabre invoked the principles of '89 to prevent the exploitation of free savage communities; and Camille Pelletan denied to civilized people the right "to impose civilization on others at the cannon-mouth." The result was that the Right and the extreme Left always opposed Ferry, and, in crucial moments, many of the moderates.

Yet he kept on, and for the first time in France, gave colonization a philosophy, and, more, gave the country the actual bases of its new colonial Empire. Tunisia and Tonkin were conquered under him, despite Parliament and the country, and the foundations laid for the occupation of Madagascar and a forward policy in West Africa. Ferry took up the isolated fragments of the French Empire, added new elements, and shook the whole into a co-ordinated unity with a policy for the moment and a plan for the future. As Hanotaux summed up his work in 1898, "with a clear conscience of the past and a precise view of the future, and having considered the times and our strength, he fixed the four

<sup>19</sup> A. Rambaud, *Jules Ferry* (1903), p. 509 *et seq.*

# COMPARATIVE POSITION OF THE FRENCH COLONIES



points which henceforth *determined the four-fold ideal of our colonial domain*,—Tunisia, Tonkin, Congo, Madagascar. In less than fifteen years, a new Empire was written there.”<sup>20</sup> In a word, he made France the second colonial power of the world, where formerly she could scarcely vie with Portugal.

Even more important than his actual achievements, however, was his colonial philosophy, for, on this, French practice was moulded for decades.<sup>21</sup> In essence, it was a philosophy based on economics, and it must always be remembered that this was an almost unknown method of approach in the eighties. Ferry saw that the world was changing, and that the opening of Africa and the Far East was involving a completely new orientation of affairs,—a new state in which the Sudan and the Mekong had to be considered as well as the Rhine. On the other hand, he demonstrated how this unveiling of hitherto closed lands coincided with a new need of such outlets. France was becoming industrialized, and Ferry insisted that this was the most important fact in French existence, and not any hysterical raving about lost provinces: *revanche* might be a laudable desire, but it was the changing position and demands of industry that were the vital features of the situation, and to concentrate on mere emotionalism meant a positive betrayal of the country’s real interests. France, willy-nilly, was becoming increasingly industrialized: industrialization obviously meant increased production: increased production could only be maintained if the products were sold: therefore, the trend of evolution being what it was, France had to have markets. “Markets, outlets,” were the bases on which Ferry erected the colonial policy of France.

“Is it not clear,” he asked, “that, for all the great powers of modern Europe, since their industrial power commenced, there is posed an immense and difficult problem, which is the basis of industrial life, the very condition of existence,—*the question of ‘markets’*? Have you not seen the great industrial nations one by one arrive at a colonial policy? And can we say that this colonial policy is a lunacy for modern nations? Not at all, *Messieurs*, this policy is, for all of us, a necessity, like the ‘market’ itself.”<sup>22</sup>

It will be seen that Ferry’s theory rested on four elements which were to him indissolubly connected, namely industrialization, protection, markets, and colonies. The new *régime* was obviously one of industrialization *à outrance*; the maintenance, and even the introduction, of this was impossible without rigid protection (witness Germany and the

<sup>20</sup> Ferry’s *Collected Speeches*, Vol. IV, p. 482.

<sup>21</sup> Outlined in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 12/10/83, 28/3/84, 29/7/85, and Senate, 12/12/84.

<sup>22</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Senate, 12/11/84. Cp. Etienne in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 2/12/91.

United States); and even this would not suffice unless provision were made to dispose of the produce; and, with every nation becoming more and more an economic world unto itself and separating itself from its neighbours by tariff-walls, the only available and certain markets were those of the colonies. That was the sequence from industrial development to colonization, and that was why, to the Ferry school, industry could not really expand and the country could not become self-sufficient unless colonial development went on *pari passu*. The two were linked together, and, in the post-1870 world at least, the development of the one could not take place without a corresponding development of the other. The four bases of Ferry's policy were thus rather regarded as the inter-dependent parts of an organism, than as accidentally related and separable policies flung into one theory at Ferry's desire. The relation was organic rather than fortuitous.

The United States and Germany were both evolving industrial systems on a protectionist basis, and France had to follow suit or fall back. Already, her traditional market in South America was being undermined, and already her agriculture was menaced by more cheaply produced cereals from the newer regions of the world. The signs were clear for him who would read. Hence, the trend was clearly in the direction of industrialization at home, and the development of markets in the colonies. France, with a declining man-power, had no men available for extensive colonial ventures, so that, if colonization meant emigration from the mother-country, it was a will-o'-the-wisp so far as France was concerned. But Ferry insisted that, in the new world of industry, and with the temperate colonies of the world already annexed, colonization was no longer a transplantation of settlers. "I have often said that there is no need to have a surplus population in order to colonize: an excess of capital will suffice."<sup>23</sup> Colonization now meant "spheres of influence" in tropical lands rather than *colonies de peuplement* for settlement, and so what was demanded was not an outlet for emigration, but for industries, export, capital. "It is a new form of colonization," he said in the final exposition of his policy in July, 1885, "suitable for peoples who have either a mass of available capital or an excess of products"; and went on to say that a country which allowed large numbers of its nationals to go abroad was not in an enviable position.

A colony to France was thus a *market*, both for manufactured goods and for the redundant capital of France. It was a necessary element in rounding-off the self-sufficiency of the world-within-a-world which the protectionist system abroad made necessary in France. The old free-trade ideas of 1860 no longer pertained: the new world was one of

<sup>23</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 3/3/88; or *Collected Speeches*, Vol. V, p. 131.

tariff-boundaries and economic self-sufficiency, and the whole structure, if not providing for outlets, and for the constant employment of the man-power of France in France itself and for the utilization of all French capital either in France or the colonies, would be top-heavy. Raw materials were not once mentioned by Ferry; in the eighties of last century, not even a Ferry could envisage a shortage of primary products. He took the raw materials and the capacity for manufacturing them for granted; what concerned him was lest the whole industrial machine might be stopped for lack of outlets, might suffer from congestion at the distributing end. The problem was not to make the goods but to sell them: and so a sufficiently large colonial Empire, by ensuring this, would impart the necessary stability and certainty to the whole of French economic life. Given the premises of the eighties, Ferry's arguments were logically unassailable, and his remedy attractively simple. The only difficulty was that the premises changed so rapidly—with rubber and cotton, for instance.

In Ferry's theory, the definitely new points were the economic *motif* of colonization and the stress on the economic interdependence of mother-country and colony. Especially clear was his linking of the protectionist system and colonization through the common-term of industrialization. As he said, "The protectionist system is like a steam-boiler without a safety-valve, unless it has a healthy and serious colonial policy as a corrective and auxiliary"; and, in a still more famous slogan, "The colonial policy of the Third Republic is the offspring of her industrial policy."<sup>24</sup> European consumption was satiated, and more, it was diminishing in so far as France was concerned, with the growth of protectionism: only the colonies remained. Colonization therefore was becoming interpreted as more and more of an economic nature. Eugene Etienne, the Under-Secretary of State who built up the colonial organization, went even further than his master Ferry in emphasizing this point, for he said that all colonization had economics as the sole goal, and demanded,—“in the presence of that economic movement which has come out of America and which can neither be combated nor denied, and which to-day is invading the whole of Europe, what are you going to do with your products if you can no longer export them?”<sup>25</sup> As a result of this new stress, a solid colonial *bloc* came to be formed, largely inspired by the cotton industrialists who stood against the popular outcry, and, as early as 1889, planned railway-extensions in the Red River country of Indo-China and examined the possibilities of the newly-conquered Sudan.

Even the economists, for so long the most hostile opponents of all

<sup>24</sup> J. Ferry, *Le Tonkin et la Mère-Patrie* (1890), pp. 40, 42.

<sup>25</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 2/12/91, p. 2381.

colonial ventures, seemed to be turning round in the late eighties. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, the Ferry of the economists, who, if not the most profound, was at least the most assertive of them, had published the first edition of *De la Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes* in 1874,—the first great work of colonial vulgarization in France. Though he tended unduly to decry the lack of French organization, he yet pled for the general cause of colonization. "Colonization is for France a matter of life or death. Either France becomes a great African Power, or in a century or two, she will be a secondary European Power, and will count in the world little more than Greece or Rumania counts in Europe." Gide joined him in emphasizing that colonization was rather a question of duty than of interest, and, savouring though this did of the old concept that colonies merely meant added responsibilities, it yet helped. In addition, John Stuart Mill's statement that the foundation of colonies was the best work in which the capital of an old country could engage was freely quoted. Economic theory was thus changing on this matter, and the economists did not confine themselves to abstract theory alone. They invoked statistics to clinch their points, and to show that France positively had to look outside Europe. The gradual diminution of her exports (from 4,518 million francs in 1876 to 4,281 millions in 1886, despite the industrialization in the interim) was a prediction of what would be her fate if she raised no colonial markets, and the comparison was the more poignant because the figures related to the free-trade period, whereas, since 1880, the tariff-policy had converted economic Europe into a series of armed camps, and both intensified the competition and shut off certain markets from France.

But Ferry did not rely on the economic argument alone. He also stressed the imperious political necessity of colonization for France. The widening of the stage which decided the balance of power in the world after 1870 could not be neglected; France had to advance in order to stand still in comparison with other Powers. Hence, quite apart from the economic benefits to be derived from colonization, and even if colonization directly entailed large losses, there were adequate motives. Europe had outgrown Europe, and France had to take cognizance of the wider stage. The navy had to have new *points d'appui*, now that China and Africa and Tahiti were within its orbit, for wars now were caused in Samoa and the Nile Valley and the Indian frontier as much as in the Baltic or the Balkans. "And that is why Tunisia, Saigon, and Cochinchina were necessary, that is why we need Madagascar, and why we are at Diégo-Suarez (Madagascar) and will never leave them!" cried Ferry in the Deputies in July, 1885.<sup>26</sup> To abstain from the forward

<sup>26</sup> *Journal Officiel, Deps.*, 29/7/85.

movement, especially in the name of the short-sighted chauvinism of "revenge" on Germany, would under the circumstances be self-annulling, a bankruptcy of French rights, he argued in effect: it would mean a new treaty of 1763 and a kindred humiliation, without the excuse of Rosbach and the Pompadour. "The blue line of the Vosges!"—he cried the catchword of his opponents in contempt.<sup>27</sup> No: "it is neither in the Mediterranean nor the Channel that the decisive battle will take place, and Marseilles and Toulon will be defended quite as much in the China Seas as in the Mediterranean," ran his swan-song in 1885. Colonization, in short, had a political as well as an economic background.

There Ferry's theory stopped. It never got beyond protection and colonial markets to the issues of raw materials and the best form of colonial development: it was a fighting theory of origins rather than one of development, and considered the precursory stage and the ultimate goal rather than the actual means of colonization. But, despite its limitations, it was a coherent and reasoned doctrine, a doctrine that France had hitherto completely lacked. In short, Ferry gave the expansionists a theory, the tenets of which they unhesitatingly followed till the close of the century. His was the cohesive force during the period of the acquisition of new colonies in the nineties, and thus served its purpose. When actual organization and the *minutiae* of colonization became questions of moment in the ensuing decade, Ferry's theory was a little antiquated, but, after all, it was avowedly only for the period of origins.

When the theory was exploded with the brusqueness of a bombshell in the midst of the anti-colonial France of the eighties, it received the reception that one would expect. To an almost uncomprehending silence at first, there succeeded a veritable *Jehad* of indignant expostulation, ending only with Ferry's political martyrdom and death. His theory was the political scandal in the interlude between the war and Boulangism, and he was twice overthrown. The Conservatives, the Radical party, the Press, and later the Boulangists all opposed him, and he became the most unpopular man in France.

On March 30, 1885, the occasion of his second fall, occurred the most spectacular scene in the history of French colonization. The previous day, there had been a panic in Paris when news came through of General de Negrier's defeat at Langson in Indo-China and the threatened evacuation even of the Delta region, the last post of the French. The next day, crowds of several thousands pressed against the gates of the Palais-Bourbon, crying, "*À mort Ferry!*" and working themselves up into a general Carmagnole frame of mind; and, within, the scene beggared

<sup>27</sup> E.g. in preface to *Le Tonkin et la Mère-Patrie*, 1st edition, 1882.

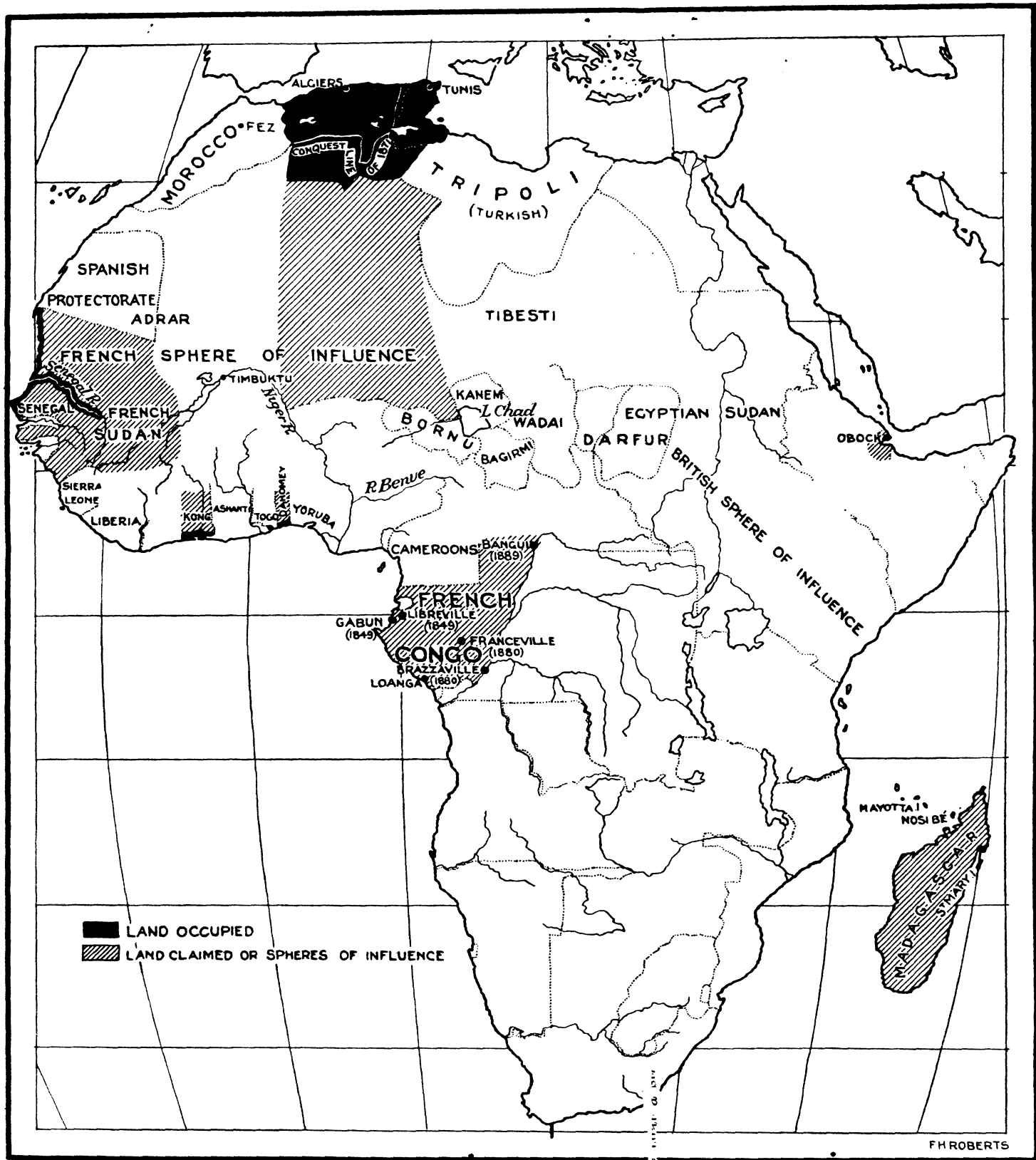
description. Ferry, standing against the storm, declared that the true enemies were not the pirates of Loch-Nam, not the outlaws of the Cho-Moi gorges, but those who had reduced the majority for the Tonkin vote to three, and had cut down the necessary credits. The back benches, and not the Black-Flags of Indo-China, were France's foes. He read Brière de L'Isle's despatch announcing the defeat, but deprecated the panic and the mob-tumult. After him, Clemenceau at once arose and, with the full approval of the House, hurled at Ferry the statement: "We can enter into no discussion with you. We have no longer Ministers before us, but men charged with *high-treason*, on whom if the principles of justice still exist, the hand of the law will soon swoop!" The vote immediately afterwards was 306 to 149 against Ferry: and the menace of the mobs came nearer, and the voices crying his death penetrated the very Chamber.<sup>28</sup>

March 30, 1885, was clearly the nadir of colonization in France. So Ferry fell, and, falling, kept secret news that would have fully vindicated himself, but which, disclosed at that juncture and in that fashion, would have hindered, and probably wrecked, the negotiations then proceeding on the Chinese frontier. He remained isolated on the fringe of the Republican party, he was defeated for the Presidency, he was shot at in the corridor of the Chamber, he was insulted as "Le Tonkinois" whenever he appeared in public, and in the elections of 1889 was even defeated by a Boulangist. Not till 1891 did his ostracism end and the Vosges electors send him back to the Senate; but he died, worn out, if vindicated, early in 1893.<sup>29</sup> He had paid the ultimate price. France sometimes decrees that a statesman has deserved well of his country; more often she crucifies him. But Ferry needed no formal adulation, for the nature of his work was best shown in the very sites of his statues, at Saint-Die, Tunis and Haiphong. "*Ferry le Traître*" was the first of the French colonials, the creator of the French Empire—that Empire in which the great forward movement was starting all along the front in the very year of his death.

But it was some time before his sacrifices bore fruit, for France in the years after 1885 was whirling back in a storm of Continentalism. "The vote of March 30 was the condemnation not only of the greatest living French statesman, but of the principle which had guided the policy of France since the Congress of Berlin." The result was that the next six years were negative ones in so far as colonial expansion was concerned. But the foundations were being laid for the great onrush of the nineties. Eugene Etienne, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies

<sup>28</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 31/3/85.

<sup>29</sup> A. Gaisman, *L'Œuvre de la France en Tonkin* (1904), p. 77.



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from 1887 to 1892, was orientating and fixing the principles of French colonial policy, and, although the Deputies were "surprised and alarmed" and public opinion "still badly prepared to accept them," he outlined the empire-schemes that events were tending towards in Africa. Speaking in a famous speech of May, 1890, on the subject of the Dahomey expedition, and answering the anti-colonial interpellation, he definitely postulated the fact that France had not only a series of trading-posts in Africa but an African Empire. He made France see the unity and cohesion of her African efforts, and stood for concerted action as against the *petits paquets* or desultory efforts of the previous decades. Ignoring the jeers of the Right, but supported by the Centre and moderate Left, he claimed the whole of the *hinterland* as, or as becoming, French. He thus reduced Ferry's generalizations to a concrete programme, and fixed the course of French activities in Africa for the ensuing years.

"If you drop a line from the Tunisian border past Lake Chad to the Congo, you can say that most of the territories between that line and the sea, excepting Morocco and the English, German and Portuguese coastal possessions hidden in the immense circumference, are either French or are destined to enter within the French sphere of influence. We have there a vast and immense domain which is ours to colonize and to make fruitful; and I think that, at this time, taking into account the world-wide movement of expansion, at the same time as foreign markets are closing against us, and we ourselves are thinking of our own market, I think, I repeat, that it is wise to look to the future and reserve to French commerce and industry those outlets which are open to her in the colonies and by the colonies."<sup>30</sup>

Obvious as this may seem now, it was a unique conception in the France of 1890 to visualize an Empire from the Chad to the sea and the Congo to the Mediterranean, and even to postulate any unified plan, still less a constant forward-movement based on the economic *motif* alone. It was singularly fortunate that France, at this crucial moment, had as the guiding force of colonial organization a man with a definite policy and a determination to advocate that policy in the face of strenuous opposition.

This year, 1890, may be taken as the definite turning-point in the history of France's second colonial Empire, in that it marked the commencement of a really constructive interest in colonial questions. Etienne's "Advisory Colonial Council" amply demonstrated this, impossible as such a conception would have been even five years before. The previous period of stagnation, of retreat even, had known no such interest, and it was only the Boulangist adventure and the Panama scandal that attracted public notice. Where colonial progress was

<sup>30</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 11/5/90, p. 750. See *L'Afrique Française*, Nov., 1907, p. 403, for article on "Etienne."

mentioned, as in the case of the Sudanese venture, it was only to be assailed. Now, however, when the violence of the Ferry epoch had subsided, and the problem could be approached with clearer minds on the part of the politicians and a kind of jaded acquiescence by the public, progress was possible. To the old positive hostility, a more or less uneasy mistrust had succeeded, but it at least allowed of some expansion.<sup>31</sup> The new period thus niggardly allowed was by the pressure of facts largely one of military expeditions,—in Dahomey, Sudan, Timbuktu, Chad, Madagascar, and Upper Tonkin,—and the spectacular shattering of native kingdoms at least associated an element of the always desired “glory” with colonization.<sup>32</sup>

But it would be unjust to characterize this period as solely military : it is true that the colonies now began to be looked on as a school for military training and that the military were amongst the keenest exponents of expansion ; but, over and above this, there were so many expeditions because the extent of territory conquered was so vast, and because in every case, powerful native kingdoms, organized almost entirely on a predatory fighting basis, were in the way. It was inevitable, therefore, that colonization in the nineties should partake of a military flavour, but all the time it was clearly realized that there was, in addition, the economic side. Indeed, in the minds of those who directed colonial evolution, there was no doubt but that the soldier was merely the forerunner of the trader and exploiter. After the patrol, and without it if possible, came the *entrepreneurs*. “We must push the traders to the front,” argued Etienne, in the Deputies in 1891, and must emphasize pacific missions like those of Monteil and Binger in West Africa. “*La Politique Coloniale*” (that is, the economic conception of Ferry and Etienne) was in the ascendant, as against “the policy of abstention” of the seventies and “the policy of colonial conservation” (implying a standing-still as against expansion) of the eighties. Instead of the negative and unprogressive features of former policies, a reasoned optimism was to be found.<sup>33</sup>

It is true that, until about 1894, this was hindered by the triumph of the Continental ideas of Clemenceau and Déroulède, but the alliance with Russia (1892) and a new *détente* with Germany (1894), by provoking a sense of security, allowed a turn again to the colonies. This was especially the case when Gabriel Hanotaux entered his memorable term of office at the Quai d’Orsay in 1894, because he followed Ferry in believing that, not only was colonial development inevitable, but actually profit-

<sup>31</sup> G. Hanotaux, *Fachoda* (1909), pp. 229, 72.

<sup>32</sup> Related in full in P. Gaffarel, *Notre expansion coloniale en Afrique* (1918), chap. 4 *et seq.*

<sup>33</sup> Ferry in preface to 2nd edition of *Le Tonkin et la Mère-Patrie* (1890), pp. 38-41.

able and strengthening to the power concerned. Accordingly, he sponsored a forward policy in northern and central Africa and in Madagascar, and these years (1894-1898) saw the most continuous advance in all parts of the French colonial Empire. The spirit of Ferry's expansion of 1884-1885 was now accepted as directing the movement of French colonization, and there was a steady advance and colonization. These ideas held until the rudder again went to Clemenceau's hand (1906-1909). That vigorous theorist, inflexibly opinionated as he was, was throughout the embittered foe of French colonization.

In the interim, thought on colonial policy was crystallizing in various directions. That colonization was inevitable now seemed beyond dispute: that it was "an imperious duty," to use Etienne's phrase, was not so certain: that it was a wise move economically and politically was believed at least by the directing minds, and, owing to the propaganda of bodies like the "Committee of French Africa" from 1891 on, by a widening circle of outsiders. And, most significant of all, it was coming to be believed that colonization was a supplement to, rather than an antagonist of, the prized theory of "continental solidarity," the parties of the Duc de Broglie<sup>34</sup> and of Clemenceau notwithstanding. Beyond that, there was practically a consensus of opinion that colonization should pay, whether it actually did so or not. No attention was paid to the question of the development of the colonies as individual entities: that was simply unthinkable in the nineties: they were pieces in the wider organism and their sole function was to strengthen France and to serve her needs. They had to develop along the lines France needed, they had to sacrifice themselves if need be for France. "France, which has sacrificed so many lives and so many millions to obtain privileged markets, and which only consented to the sacrifices under this promise, has the right to control the improvement of colonial cultures and industries"—so ran the official history. Again, "the colonies can enrich themselves in selling us cotton, instead of ruining us in making cotton goods."<sup>35</sup> The subservience of the colony to the motherland in every way was thus unquestioned, and France was enforcing the colonial theory that England employed in 1660. In fact, she was building up a gigantic tariff-union, a huge *Zollverein*, with the parts completely secondary to the centre.

As a result of this clearly perceived theory and the consistent forward policy in practice, the French Empire expanded by leaps and bounds. The million square kilometres of 1870 had become 8½ millions by 1914, and the colonial population had gone from five to 50 millions. France

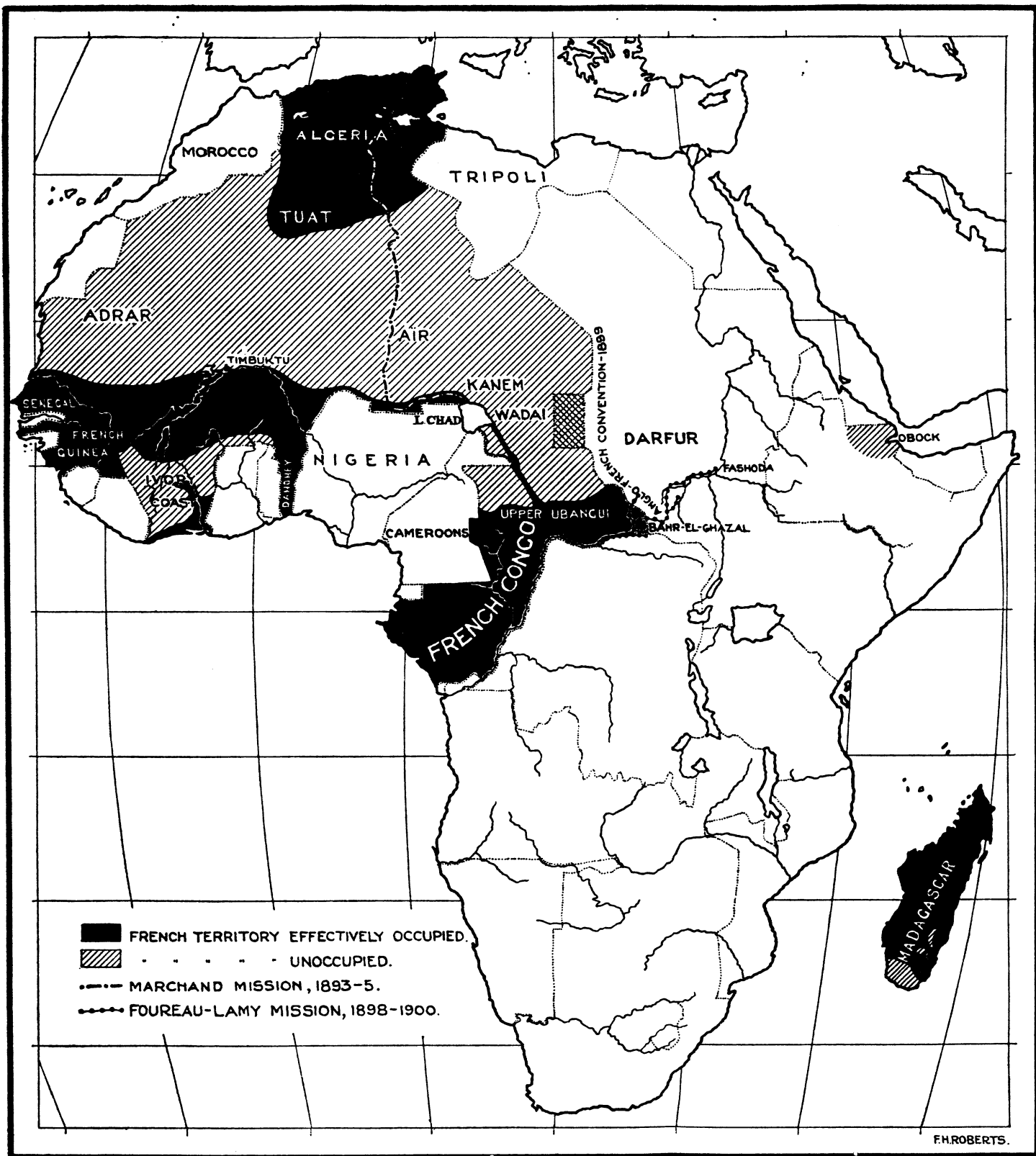
<sup>34</sup> E.g., in *Journal Officiel*, Senate, 12/12/84.

<sup>35</sup> Dubois et Terrier, *Un Siècle d'Expansion coloniale* (1902), p. 396.

was the second colonial Power in the world, and, if the Atlantic-Indian Ocean dream had been shattered by the *débâcle* of Marchand at Fashoda, the Congo-Mediterranean policy was realizing itself more completely every day, and the separate colonies were becoming merged in the wider unity of French Africa. Already by 1906, when the reaction became noticed, conquest and organization had proceeded entirely across the Sahara, and with offshoots as far apart as Wadai and Mauretania. The whole was being galvanized into unity, and consolidation was taking the place of military conquest. Railway missions and economic surveys were replacing military patrols, and it was Binger rather than Marchand who set the model.

But another swing of the pendulum was due, and another of the kaleidoscopic changes, so typical of French activities, was about to take place. Just as the period of abstention had given way to Ferry's unrestrained optimism, and just as the following stagnant period had faded into the forward policy of 1894-1906, so the latter gave way to a reaction on diametrically opposed lines, a reaction which lasted until 1914. The causes were easy to find, quite apart from Clemenceau's Continentalism. The very intensity of the expansionist period had been such as could not endure. France had gone too rapidly, and the bewildered people called for a breathing-space, a stock-taking, a period of revising results. France began to inquire into her colonial position, as it stood after the conquests of the former period; and, appalled by the immensity of the task of consolidating the results achieved, gave way once more to pessimism on colonial matters. Naturally, the actual achievement did not tally with the unduly sanguine experiences of the preceding period, and the undoubted advances were hidden behind the more obvious faults. These faults, being in the fore, were taken to represent the whole situation, and, although a clear perception of the evil features was in the long run beneficial as aiding a solution of the problems, a presentation of faults *en masse* naturally engendered a disgruntled attitude.

In the first place, there had been too much activity, and, because France had forced the pace, it had been too military. The success of force in West Africa had placed a premium on its use elsewhere, and it had come to be accepted as a necessary concomitant of colonial activity, despite the experience of Gallieni in Madagascar. Colonization thus tended to become a synonym for a training in arms, and activity came to centre round Ahmadou in the Senegal, Samory on the Upper Niger, the Touareg in the desert, Rabah in Wadai, Behanzin in Dahomey, and the pirates in Tonkin. Conquest had to be the first phase of the situation, given a concerted native resistance; but, by the very prominence it obtained, it tended to lose its relatively insignificant place in the colonizing



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process and to be almost the final end. It was the military expeditions that France heard of, and not the pacification by men like Gallieni in Madagascar, Lyautey in Tonkin, and Binger in the Sudan. Colonization, coloured by the means bringing it about, became stamped with a military hue.

Secondly, there was the feeling that, even admitting conquest to be but a passing phase, action had taken place far too rapidly. The rate of advance outgrew the country's power of assimilation, and "territorial annexation" was the catchword rather than "healthy exploitation." This meant to say that consolidation had been viewed as rather a negative phase of colonization, and consequently the gravest defect of the French method was a lack of general plan. Ferry had had a plan, but even that had not at any time descended to practical details, and was somewhat anomalous as applied to the conditions of twentieth-century Africa. Paul Bert, perhaps the most profound of the early colonial theorists, had both general ideas and a practical plan, based on a rational administration rather than indefinite territorial expansion; but, despite his successes in organizing Tonkin, his views were not generally adopted, even by his successors in his own colony, and his claim for a scientific organization of the colonies was neglected. "He considered it essential for colonial government that principles should first be established, and a system of procedure adopted": the French practice was to proceed in exactly the reverse fashion, by a trial-and-error process.

It was this phase which seemed so culpable to the French critics in the early years of the new century,—that the colonial activities of the French, notoriously a logical people, should be vitiated by an almost complete lack of plan. As Louis Vignon summed it up, "if the Republic has known how to conquer, it has not known, any more than the previous governments, how to administer." So marked was the general insouciance that the most evident feature of French colonial efforts was "the confusion of methods and principles, the incoherence of the solutions, and the contradictions of the results."<sup>36</sup> Even earlier, J. Chailley-Bert, the disciple of Paul Bert, the pioneer colonial theorist, had summed up the situation in words that could not be gainsaid: "No sooner is the question of colonies broached than we desert those principles which form the basis of our policy; we lack systematic action, albeit imperious logic has long been our guide. We live from day to day; we wander haphazard."<sup>37</sup> Empiricism reigned throughout, and France had neither

<sup>36</sup> L. Vignon, *Un Programme de Politique Coloniale* (1919), pp. 547-548. Cp. Guieysse in *Presse Coloniale*, 9/3/09.

<sup>37</sup> J. Chailley-Bert, *The Colonization of Indo-China* (1894), p. vii.

a logical plan nor a premeditated policy of colonization.<sup>38</sup> Thus it came about that her action was one of *petits paquets*, the policy so much attacked by Hubert and Sarraut and the other post-war reformers. The colonies were divided between three ministers; there was no co-ordination between them, or any guiding principles to correlate their scattered activities; and France did not even have a uniform Moslem policy.

This incoherence could be readily explained. In the forefront of the causal factors was the perpetual hostility, which existed even in the expansionist period, although perforce somewhat veiled. This was so great that it was necessary to present colonial projects as a *fait accompli* in each case: every forward move in the Sahara, for instance, was taken by individual initiative, almost by chance. The hazard of circumstances and the personality of the man on the spot were the deciding factors: Paris either coldly sanctioned the result or cashiered the person responsible. Further, even if the rulers of the Colonial Office approved of a unified policy, they were hampered by political conditions. After Etienne left the Colonial Office in 1895, France seemed never to have a department the policy of which was made consistent and permanent by non-political heads: on the contrary, the general policy, and even the details, became dependent on the multitudinous political changes. As a result, policy became, not only bewilderingly contradictory, but curiously anæmic. It was pointed out that, because of the direct dependence on politics, colonial representatives, who naturally wanted favours, were always ministerialists. Not till 1910 did the colonial budgets evoke even the faintest enthusiasm, for, as the budget-reporter of 1911 said, France had "no colonial policy worthy of the name," and, as the policy lacked vitality or even existence, there was nothing to discuss!<sup>39</sup> The policy, such as did exist, was one of hesitations and variations and contradictions, and it was a good comment of the situation that the Minister of the Colonies, who looked after about a third of the colonies, was chiefly engaged in such matters as naming streets in Réunion or choosing fire-lieutenants for the Antilles! There was no order, no spontaneity,—in a word, no policy. "It is abundantly clear that France has no colonial programme, and that, in maintaining this negative attitude, she is faithful to a tradition. She has no programme, and has never had one."<sup>40</sup>

However, there was still another reason for this, quite distinct from

<sup>38</sup> Isaac, in *Recueil des Délibérations du Congrès Colonial National, Paris, 1889-1890*, Vol. I, p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> Viollette in *Journal Officiel, Deps.*, 4/4/11, and debates on the next three days. This is summarized in the colonial budget-report for 1911, Part I.

<sup>40</sup> C. Regismanset, *Questions Coloniales: 1912-1923* (1923), Vol. II, p. 232, or *Questions Coloniales: 1900-1912*, pp. 128-129.

the anti-colonialism and the undue dependence on fluctuating political conditions; and here one gets to the fundamental paradox in French colonization. France lacked a practical policy because facts were sacrificed to certain inapplicable general principles. Relying on the general principles of '89, she carried "the excessive logic of her spirit" to the colonies, and, considering the general philosophical truths to the neglect of the facts of the situation, achieved results that were fundamentally illogical.<sup>41</sup> It was not logical to apply the generalizations of Jean-Jacques to settle a problem of matriarchal land-tenure in New Caledonia, or a complicated Bambaré marriage-custom, or religious issues connected with the Moslem foundations in Tunisia: yet that is just what France did. In reality, the procedure was the reverse of logical. A principle from another sphere simply *could* not be applied to the numerous problems of colonial administration: it was quite inapposite, and moreover, inflexible. Sacrificing to the fetish of an all-embracing principle, France thus came to regulate her colonial affairs by no principle at all. The theoretically rational was to them the arbiter of everything, whereas, in reality, in dealing with native races, the rationalism of the eighteenth-century Encyclopædists is likely, indeed certain, to hinder any compromise that would be the practically logical solution of the question. That was the fault; the French would not compromise, and the existing illogicalities of native organization had to go. To introduce something logical from the French point of view, everything logical to the native had to be destroyed, the good with the bad. It was the same with political and economic organizations,—both of them based on the idea of assimilation to France. France tried to make the most complicated acts conform to the reasonings of the simplest syllogisms, and the result was anarchy, in so far as a coherent policy was concerned.

Because of the triumph of general principles which were so delusively simple, everything in French colonial organization came to centre round assimilation. At a blow, this was to solve all native and political and economic problems connected with colonization. France was organized on the principles of Rousseau and 1789; what more natural, then, that the colonies should be organized *in toto* on the model of France? Thus, the guiding principles of French organization were assimilation of the natives to French citizens, assimilation of colonial economic organization to that of France, and (to 1901 at least) assimilation of political organization to that of a French *département*. A colony was a section of France separated from France by a geographical accident, but still a part of

<sup>41</sup> J. Harmand, *Domination et Colonisation* (1910), pp. 13-16; O. Meynier, *L'Afrique Noire* (1911), p. 258.

the one organism and living by exactly the same means. This outlook came to dominate French colonization, the more easily because of the natural tendency of the French to excessive centralization and officialdom. "Look at the laws of our colonies," cried Chaillé-Bert in derision. "They are laws which have been modelled almost entirely on the Home Legislature. They consist partly of the Civil Code, the Code of Procedure, the Commercial Code, the Penal Code, and a host of our administrative laws. In Algeria, in Indo-China, in Guiana, in Réunion, we find almost everywhere the same laws and the same administration."<sup>42</sup> The French construed assimilation to mean, not the adaptation of the French spirit and institutions to varying conditions, but an absolute identity, even to the most minute detail. Instead of being an ideal, a tendency, a principle, assimilation was taken to mean an exact reproduction of the *minutiae* of administration in every branch. The wider parallelism of spirit which a moderate theory of assimilation would have entailed was submerged beneath a mass of detail which prevented the very aim sought: concentrating on the letter, it lost the spirit. As Ribot said, "it was the triumph of a false symmetry," and a direct refusal to face the fact that the primal desideratum in organizing a world-wide Empire was not conformity of method to some philosophical truth anent the nature of French colonization,—and still less to have one rigid method which could not be adhered to in practice, and the lack of substitutions for which meant a complete absence of method.

By about 1905, the failure of assimilation, both as a basic principle and as a means of actual administration, was manifest. As early as 1892, Ferry had led a reaction against *administrative* assimilation; *native* assimilation had resulted only in the failure of Algeria and the farce of the Old Colonies; and *economic* assimilation was breaking down, now that the colonies were receiving a kind of financial autonomy of their own. The failure in every branch was obvious: but no adequate substitute had emerged, and the resultant gap, fitting in as it did with the prevailing feeling of disillusionment in regard to the colonies, aided the cause of anti-colonialism.

Another contributory factor at this stage was the changing economic relationship between mother-country and colonies. This issue had been forced by the rapid transformation of Indo-China and the demands of Algeria for fiscal autonomy. The colonies were asserting their economic desires independently of, and even in conflict with, those of France; and Ferry's idea of reciprocal consideration had given way to a more or less veiled antagonism. By 1900, the local industries of Indo-China were demanding protection against metropolitan competition, and, at home,

<sup>42</sup> Chaillé-Bert (1894), *op. cit.*, pp. ix-x.

this was looked on as symbolical of the new colonial status, and as something to be systematically repressed. De Lanessan, for example, was bitterly opposed for encouraging cotton-spinning at Hanoi,<sup>43</sup> and even Doumer, a successor of his, although a radical reformer at home, held in 1905 that a colony should only be allowed to produce those cereals and raw materials demanded by the mother-country and should never engage in industry. Harmand, a leading theorist, thus summed up the relationship in 1912, and he again was a liberal:—

“ That the colonies are made for the metropolis, for the many and varied advantages that the metropolis may draw from them, is evident : if colonies, the foundation of which nearly always costs the metropolis so much money and sacrifices and which exposes them to such great risks, were not so made to serve those metropolises, *they would have no raison d'être*, and one cannot see by what aberration civilized states would dispute them with so much rude jealousy.”<sup>44</sup>

The proposition was deemed to be beyond argument : and yet, in practice, the colonies were asserting themselves as distinct organisms, with interests either apart from, or opposed to those of France, the cases of Algeria and Indo-China being especially in point. They demanded a right to manufacture goods ; they claimed tariff privileges ; they even welcomed foreign trade and capital. Seeing these tendencies, the French in France added an economic argument to their already profound opposition to colonies. If colonies were to fall off the mother-tree as soon as the process of pacification was finished, of what use were they at all ? The issue was palpably clear to the French, who could not, and still cannot, conceive an autonomous relationship between centre and parts.

Somewhat irrationally, further support to this antagonistic position was given by the failure of French emigration in so far as the colonies were concerned. Bismarck's old gibe that the French had colonies without colonists was clearly merited, for most French colonies could be adequately described as “ functionaries and a garrison.” Or as Clemenceau, in his usual vitriolic denunciation, burst out in the Deputies in November, 1890 :—

“ Since you are great colonizers, well, colonize ! In order, you say, that one may see these colonies, see capital go there, see colonists arrive and industry prosper and commerce establish itself, and new markets found there ? Well, *do it* ! But, up to the present, you have exported only functionaries who cost us a great deal, and who seem to have no other task than to prevent all this coming to pass ! ”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> J. L. de Lanessan, *La Tunisie* (2nd edition, 1917), pp. 182-184 ; Dubois et Terrier, *Un Siècle d'Expansion Coloniale* (1902), p. 819.

<sup>44</sup> J. Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>45</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 28/11/90, p. 2302.

And the condemnation was justified, if European emigration was desired in the colonies, for outside of Algeria, which was always considered as "a prolongation of France," and not as a colony at all, there were practically no French settlers in the colonies. This did not mean to say that Frenchmen were not leaving France: some 15,000 were going every year to La Plata and Canada, and even Chile, and the ordinary French citizens in the nineties heard far more of land and conditions in those countries than in their own colonies.<sup>46</sup> This drift only served to make the failure of transplantation *within* the French Empire the more obvious, and the opponents of colonization asked what was the use of colonies which failed to attract colonists?

As a matter of fact, this attitude was largely fallacious, because, acting under Ferry's theory, France had sought, and had been able to obtain, only tropical possessions, *colonies d'exploitation*, which demanded capital rather than colonists. It is true that the annexation of Africa had proceeded so far that no other colonies remained save this type, but, beyond the pressure of geographical facts, there was the wider theory, based on the decline of the French population and the need of finding employment for Frenchmen at home. Instead, therefore, of holding up the emigration to La Plata as a trend to be emulated in the French colonies, it would have been far more logical to have praised the absence of emigration to the colonies, and to deprecate the movement to South America. But, as it was, the argument was twisted to the purposes of the anti-colonials in France, and, since the premise of the theorem could not be denied, the argument was accepted, because by this time Ferry's theory was rather forgotten.

All of these reasons combined to explain the growing antagonism to the colonies in France during the present century, and to show why French general opinion thought of the colonies in terms of opprobrium and "the eternal colonial scandal." A fault unnoticed in France would suffice to reopen the whole matter, and to provoke an attack on the entire basis of the colonial system.<sup>47</sup> Literature too frequently had this *motif*, and the maladministration and crimes resulting from the bush-nostalgia of the African colonies and the refinements of corruption in Indo-China and the dallying insouciance of the Pacific were more to the front than the solid economic work emerging in these years. Algeria meant de Maupassant's *Allouma*, Africa in general a kind of background for *affaires* like the Toqué-Gaud scandal in the Congo, the Pacific a

<sup>46</sup> Burdeau Report (*L'Algérie en 1892*), p. 59. Compare P. Doumer, *L'Indo-Chine Française* (1905), p. 1, or Chaillay-Bert (1894), *op. cit.*, p. xvii.

<sup>47</sup> Sarraut in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 21/3/22; Alapetite in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 31/1/12; or debate in Depts., 20/11/08, on Guinea.

laboratory in sensualism for the Lotis and the Rarahus, and the Indo-Chinese lands the last word in corruption.<sup>48</sup> Feeling was best reflected by Emile Fabre's much-discussed play *Les Sauterelles* (1912), with its general atmosphere of colonial demoralization, or by the moral disintegration in Delafosse's analyses of African psychology.<sup>49</sup> French interest in the colonies was largely of this nature; and there was little desire to obtain a real knowledge of colonial evolution. In 1914, for example, the *Deutsche Kolonial-Gesellschaft* in Berlin had some hundreds of thousands of adherents, while France's nearest equivalent, the *Comité de l'Afrique Française*, had only 4,000! France thus knew little of her colonies, and was not anxious to fill the gap: antagonism and scandal sufficed.

It was little wonder, then, that the period from 1906 to 1914 was a fruitless one. France seemed drifting by way of an antagonistic lethargy to a recrudescence of the anti-colonialism of Ferry's period,—a position the more remarkable because of the obvious prosperity of Indo-China and Madagascar, and the general forward movement in the preceding decade in Africa. A hopeful sign, however, was in the attacks of M. Viollette, the colonial budget-reporter, from 1911 onwards, right in the heart of the period of lethargy. By dint of attacking Klobukowski's rule in Indo-China, he threw the whole colonial question into relief and showed the extent of the drift in the preceding years. For the first time since the great parliamentary debates of 1891–1892 on colonizing companies and French policy in Africa, there were vigorous discussions on colonial questions in Parliament.<sup>50</sup> Messimy, Viollette's predecessor, had performed a valuable service in clearly summing-up the statistical position of the Empire: now Viollette utilized that summary as a basis for his constructive attacks, and, even though somewhat unduly iconoclastic, he thrust the issue into the forefront of politics.<sup>51</sup>

At the same time, a strongly marked decentralizing tendency became noticeable. Ever since the institution of a separate budget for Algeria in 1900 and the vigorous demands of the Tonkin industrialists, colonial interests *per se* had been pressed to the fore. Hitherto, this assertion had been construed as a sign of impending dissolution, but, towards the close of the period of lethargy, it was perceived that such a colonial development, even in the direction of a partial autonomy, might strengthen the French Empire. A loosening of one form of control, that

<sup>48</sup> As in Claude Farrère's horrible *Les Civilisés*.

<sup>49</sup> Delafosse in *Les états d'âme d'un Colonial*; Sarraut, *La Mise en Valeur des Colonies Françaises* (1923), p. 108.

<sup>50</sup> In *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 4-7/4/11; Senate, 1-3/7/11.

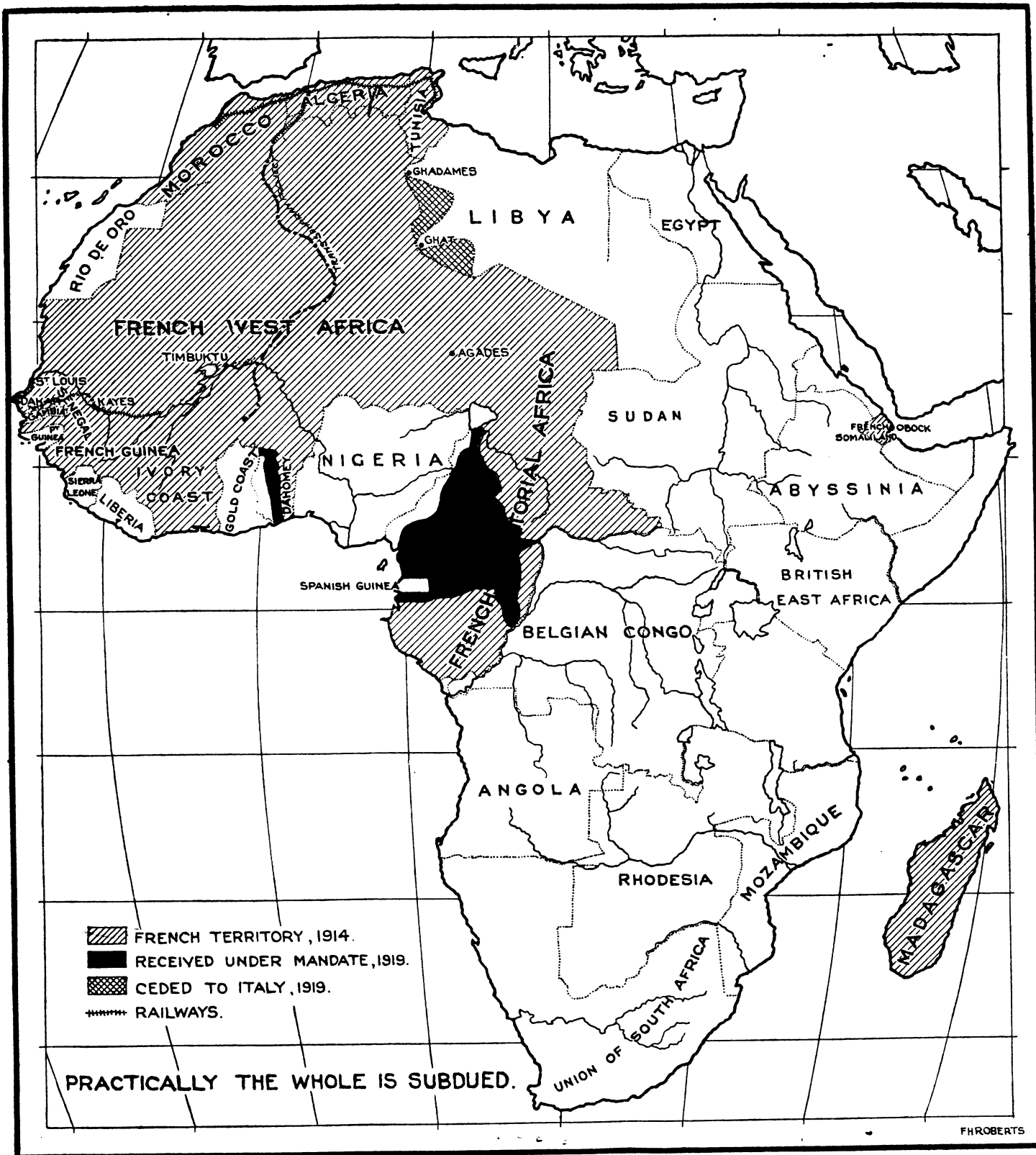
<sup>51</sup> See *Rapport sur les Budgets locaux des Colonies* (1911), Part I, or Messimy in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 5/4/11.

is, really had the effect of strengthening others, and so the net result was gain,—and this was quite a new concept in French colonial theory, “the theory of compensations,” as it might be called. The gap previously left by the breakdown of assimilation was now beginning to be filled by the development of each colony as a unit, and along its own lines. Administrative assimilation had really been doomed by the reports of Ferry and Burdeau in 1892; tariff-assimilation, though still triumphing, had been rigorously attacked since the Colonial Congress of 1906; economic assimilation in general was anomalous in the changed state of affairs; and the idea of “association,” or, in English terms, “indirect rule,” had removed the burden of assimilation as it affected native races.

The upshot was decentralization. Both in 1907 and 1911, the powers of the Governors-General were enlarged, and the logical implications of the law of 1900, which allowed each colony to have a local budget, were necessitating a larger and larger degree of financial autonomy. The decrees of Lebrun, the Minister of the Colonies in 1911, in particular, aided as they were by corresponding privileges allowed by Klotz, the Minister of Finance, marked the formal adoption of decentralization as the principle governing colonial affairs, and emancipated the colonies from the narrow political and economic tutelage of Paris.<sup>52</sup> But there were not wanting suggestions that this new tendency, as diametrically opposed to the principles previously in force, would involve only a paralysis of the colonial system, which had been built up on the very basis of “organization from Paris,”—a “method of fusion and concentration.” In all, the reforming movement would seem to have been a forced development in these years,—an unduly rapid reaction against the existing state of drift. To counteract the inert spirit of colonization, the reformers turned from consolidation to root-and-branch innovations, and were proceeding too rapidly.

By 1914, therefore, the French colonies were at the cross-roads. France had completed the conquest of her colonial Empire, and was even subduing the last rebels of Mauretania and taking the last steps across the Sahara. But organization had lagged, because the old ideas of assimilation in every sphere no longer commanded a general support. Yet, on the other hand, a decade of lethargy had bred a spirit of pessimism, and the new policy of decentralization was, to say the least, suspect. France, though perceiving the breakdown of her previous policies of assimilation and *rattachement* to Paris, lacked a constructive alternative policy, and, while conceding that a limited autonomy was not in itself necessarily harmful, was seeking a *via media* that would still concentrate

<sup>52</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 5/4/11, 28/5/11 (Messimy Report).



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the essential power in Paris. The colonies, on the other hand, having experienced a considerable degree of self-government in economic matters since 1900, were demanding an extension of their political rights, which were practically non-existent, and advocated a policy of dispersion of power. On the whole, France was just beginning to face the "new colonial problem." Messimy's information, Viollette's attacks, and the forced decentralization of 1911-1914 had all helped to bring about this situation; and France was facing the problem as a whole, and in its new orientation, when the war of 1914 came. Conquest was over; the early organization had failed; the implications of the various experiments (in the financial field, for instance) could now be gauged; and the material (if not the attitude of mind) was there for the evolution of colonial objectives and methods. As Jules Harmand summed up, France at this stage wanted clearly defined objectives, a colonial doctrine, principles to harmonize her colonial policy with her general development and that of her colonies, and a method of execution conforming to these principles and objectives,—all of which she had never had before.<sup>53</sup> France was clearly at the stage when the various disconnected and crossed threads could be picked up and sorted into a general pattern. She had the results of conquest and economic development in the past; and there seemed no reason why, if the inordinate feeling of antagonism to the colonies were to decline, and if the problem were faced as a whole, a definite colonial theory and policy could not emerge. The Empire was there, and the experience of the multitudinous experiments of the past: the future was what France made it. The strands were coming together naturally, by the very logic of events and the degree of colonial development, when the whole movement was shattered in 1914, and the problem changed its form.

<sup>53</sup> Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL ECONOMIC POLICY

**D**ESPITE the absence of a regular policy in practice, certain general conceptions were always at the back of French colonization. Of these, the most essential was that France neither had nor desired "settlement-colonies." In French colonial philosophy, there were three kinds of colonies: "*colonies de commerce ou comptoirs*," "*colonies de plantations ou d'exploitation*," and "*colonies agricoles ou de peuplement*."<sup>1</sup> The first included such embryonic trading-posts as existed on the coast of Gabun and Senegal, exchange-posts dotted down in the midst of a wilderness of tropical natives, and destined for no expansion.

"*Colonies d'exploitation*" were of a different nature, and were indeed the crux of the whole scheme. It is curiously difficult to explain this term, especially as the English term, "exploitation," represents by no means the same concept as the corresponding French one. Indeed, the meaning of the term is not at all conveyed in the sense of "exploitation": its significance is not so much economic as demographic. A colony of "exploitation" is one so situated, climatically or from the point of view of population, as to preclude any idea of European settlement on a large scale. It is a colony in which geographical conditions have decided that the great bulk of the population will always be native. Naturally, all developed tropical or sub-tropical possessions fall under this heading; but so too would temperate regions with a native population so teeming as to admit of no European labouring population. In such colonies the functions of the European government are confined to general regulation and to economic development through the agency of imported capital. The colony will be ruled from above and retained for the benefit accruing to the mother-country: incidentally, of course, the position of the native population will improve, by the very transformation of the conditions of material existence, but that is not an essential feature of the policy towards this class of colony.

A "colony of settlement," on the other hand, is one so situated as

<sup>1</sup> P. Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes* (1902 edition), Vol. II, p. 564, or L. Vignon (1888), *op. cit.*, pp. 4-6.

to allow the introduction of a large European population of all classes. It is a colony wherein the conditions of life in the mother-country can be reproduced in their essentials, where there can be extensive human migration as distinct from the migration of capital, and where European settlers can live and flourish and reproduce their kind. Naturally, such colonies are limited to the temperate zone, and, even there, to regions wherein the interests of the European population can be placed in the ascendant. Such regions are Australia and Canada, while India and Egypt and Madagascar and the Dutch East Indies are examples of "colonies of exploitation." Briefly, the difference between the two classes is that the one are "white men's lands," and the others "natives' lands." It is not that there is exploitation in the one and autonomous development in the other: indeed, such is the state of French colonial theory that, even if she had had colonies of settlement, they would have been "exploited" quite as much as "colonies of exploitation," for the absolute subservience of the colony to the mother-country has been the very mortar giving cohesion to the whole French colonial structure.

As it was, geography decided that all of the French colonies fell within the second category,—all were "colonies of exploitation." Indo-China, West Africa, the Congo, the Pacific, the sugar-islands,—the situation of all of these denied the possibility of white settlement. Even Algeria and Tunisia fell primarily within this class, because, although the climatic conditions there did not absolutely preclude large-scale European settlement, the presence of a predominant *bloc* of natives produced the same effect. So that, although the peculiarities of Algeria and Tunisia necessitated their classification as "mixed colonies," in a class by themselves, fundamentally they were "colonies of exploitation." Algeria is more an India than an Australia, despite the sub-temperate climate of the region north of the Atlas. France had no colonies of settlement in the temperate regions: all of her possessions were tropical or sub-tropical, and not one was suitable for intensive agricultural development.

*The Comité Duplex*, founded by Bonvalot the explorer to develop the colonies, sought to find exceptions to this generalization, and, by means of a scientific survey, to determine whether France was entirely doomed to tropical exploitation in her colonies. The result of the survey was so clear as to admit of no dispute.<sup>2</sup> Algeria certainly allowed European settlement as far as the climate was concerned, but to counteract this there was the native problem: the Senegal and Dahomey and Gabun were clearly impossible: the Ivory Coast allowed no small settlement and imposed almost insuperable obstacles in the way of

<sup>2</sup> *Doit-on aller aux Colonies? Enquête du Comité Duplex* (1907).

capitalistic *entrepreneurs*: Madagascar offered nothing for capitalists and little for small settlers, save near certain urban areas: the place of the Indo-Chinese in agriculture and the country's limitation to rice-production positively forbade European settlement there, unless competition with the native were allowed by proceedings so arbitrary as to be clearly inadmissible, and offered a scope only for the large-scale director: New Caledonia was like Algeria, and Tahiti suitable for capital only, and then hindered by land and labour difficulties. In brief, nowhere were there unlimited, or even large, possibilities for European settlement. The French colonist was not the peasant but the franc. Such settlement as there was in the colonies was to be by natives and not Frenchmen. Indeed, if a colony is a place where nationals of the colonizing Power can settle, France had no colonies, but only "dominions," or countries of domination—using both of these terms in their original classical meaning, Jules Harmand, a leading colonial theorist, always maintained that France had no colonies, and that this fact of necessity determined her objectives and policies. The confusion that so often arose was because this fundamental difference was forgotten, and there were efforts to make French families migrate to places which were obviously not suitable for them. The analogy of the United States and Canada and Australia was always intruding itself and obscuring the general clarity of French conceptions, whereas it would have been just as logical to have advocated the migration of English labourers to India or Nigeria.

Another needlessly confusing trend of thought arose when this abstention from emigration, which was even desirable (given France's demographic situation and the position of her colonies), was linked up with the statement that "the French cannot colonize," as, for instance, in the above-mentioned outbursts of Bismarck and Clemenceau, and the general attitude of the anti-colonials. Were refutation of this *canard* needed, Canada and La Plata would alone serve to disprove the old myth: the explanation of the lack of settlement in the French colonies proper was not at all in the absence of a colonizing spirit, but solely because destiny had given France no colonies in which such settlement was possible, save perhaps Northern Algeria and parts of western New Caledonia.

Thus, it is clear that, the French Empire being situated as it is, France cannot indulge in extensive policies of migration; nor, the demographic position of France being what it is, would this have been desirable. The geography of the colonies and the population-position of the mother-country combined, and the situation was so clear that the very existence of the complaints against the lack of French settlement in the colonies is difficult to understand, save that it has always been the obvious gibe

against the colonial party. Beyond that, it has clearly no *raison d'être*, and is rather a good feature of the situation than something to be condemned. France's colonial policy in this regard is an exact replica of the Japanese, the idea being to draw raw materials from the colonies and find markets for metropolitan products there, and by this means to find sufficient employment for her own population in the industries of the mother-country. It is essentially an industrial polity, and in no sense an emigration one.

As French colonial policy came to be defined, therefore, its first point was that colonization was not a relief for over-population.<sup>3</sup> In fact, "*peuplement*" has little to do with colonization in this sense, save where it will strengthen the mother-country and find employment for hands which are so numerous as to be idle in the mother-country itself. To say that a colony is a new France overseas is not really in accord with French colonial philosophy. As a corollary of this, the second premise of the syllogism states that all colonization is for the benefit of the life of the mother-country, and that the colonies neither have, nor can have, an autonomous existence or development apart from those of the motherland. These twin ideas of the subordination of the colonies and their complete effacement within the general organism have always been at the basis of French colonial efforts, and explain, and connect, the two policies of "economic subservience" and "assimilation." The colony is to be an element of strength to the motherland; all of its efforts are to be to lessen the burdens of that motherland: without France, it knows, and can know, no existence; and even autonomy, in the sense of a particular *local* development within the general system, cannot be entertained. To speak of special developments for separate colonies was as absurd to a Frenchman as to speak of an arm without a body: each limb existed only as a part of the general organism, and to fulfil a definite *rôle* in the functioning of the organism as an entity: and all were subservient to the one brain or nerve-centre. The French colonies were entirely organized on the model of an organism: hence the emphasis on the whole and not the parts, and, indeed, the resolute refusal to think of the parts either as entities or as potential entities.<sup>4</sup>

The idea of colonial subservience has always cropped up in French efforts, and, even now, in Albert Sarraut's reform projects of 1921, the famous *mise en valeur* scheme which is to transform the whole Empire, it is the essential premise on which he erects his argument. Without this assumption, the entire colonial system, past and present, is meaning-

<sup>3</sup> Compare Ferry in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 29/7/85.

<sup>4</sup> Article by Asmis in *Preussische Jahrbücher*, Dec. 1921, quoted in Sarraut (1923), p. 96.

less. However, this does not simply mean the old *Pacte Colonial*, or the Navigation System of the English, because the theory is now widened so as to admit the possibility, and even the desirability, of colonial progress. The idea of subservience persists, but is given a wider connotation. To the beginning of this century, there was the basis that colonies were to benefit the mother-country: this was their *only* justification, and there was a strong feeling that it was only fair, and perhaps even desirable, that this should adversely affect their own development, as an antidote to separatist or individualistic tendencies. "If they realize their dependence on us, they will not want to stand alone,"—that was the attitude.

But by 1914, while it was still asserted that the aim of colonization was to help France, there was coupled with this a recognition that development might in most cases help the colonies too. However, it was still clearly understood that, if a conflict arose between the interests of France and those of the colony, as occurred with the rise of industry in Tonkin and the beet-sugar question in the West Indies, the interests of France, despite the hardship and the apparent injustice of the case in question, were to be paramount. The possibility of conflicting interests had already arisen in practically every colony, and this was the general solution given. The utilitarian concept was as dominant as ever; the only difference was the admission that, up to the point where the development ceased to be complementary and became competitive, the benefit could be dual.

The thin edge of the wedge had been inserted with the admission that the colony might develop outside of those directions in which it was to contribute to France's coffers and needs. But it was still the exception rather than the rule that the colony should be studied as well as France, and, to 1914, the interests of the natives were in no case given a serious consideration. Always in the background was the assumption that the goal was to be one in which the colony contributed the maximum to French needs, in some form or other. The utilitarian concept was never absent, even when it became the dominant instead of the only *motif*. France, even to the time of the post-war reconstructionist policies, even to Sarraut's projects, was for ever harking back to Montesquieu's theories,—“that the American colonies were the best, because they have articles of commerce which we have not and which we cannot have, and they lack that which we produce.” And there was still a frank conformance to the opinion of the Encyclopædist that “colonies are made by and for the mother-country,” and any other interpretation of colonial destinies was practically lacking. That was, and still is, the French dream of colonization, and explains the curiously static state of colonial theory, and why the articles of Diderot on this matter read as if they were written

within the last decade. That is why, also, the notion of colonial development *qua* colonial, and anything even remotely approaching the British dominion-status, has been simply unthinkable. Centripetal tendencies were in the ascendant, and devolution of power, even the slightest, was the primal anathema. The needs of the organism were the fundamental ones; and, if a limb could be strengthened as a part of the organism, good, but, if not, then development was to be banned.

Linked up with this theory of subordination was that of assimilation, because both were aspects or implications of the organic analogy. Economic "assimilation" meant the subordination of colonial interests to those of the metropolitan consumers and manufacturers: administrative "assimilation" meant such subordination as pertained in the case of a French *département* or *commune*, and the implication that a separate existence was as impossible for Indo-China as for a Midi department: native "assimilation" was a sacrifice to the principles of French civilization and 1789, and the charming egotism that development meant changes on French lines. In each field, there was the idea of subordination to France and French interests or ideas, and a denial of local developments. Everything was centralized, and made uniform, and looked at from the interests of the centre. In practice, then, the general principles meant as much centralization and assimilation as possible, the minimum devolution of either political or financial authority, and a reservation of colonial markets to the mother-country, however much this adversely affected colonial development.

But this clear-cut theory was hindered at times by the existence of quite opposite conceptions due to the welling-up of a tide of philosophical humanitarianism, which, in a usually brief career, reversed the basic principles of colonial organization time and again. In 1789, in 1848, in 1862, and in 1871, such emotional *furores*, for they were little else, swept over the colonial field, and the previous organization went reeling back, submerged by the new-found zeal of a general principle of liberalism. A similar disturbing feature, although on a lesser scale, was always present in the form of "the ideas of '89," or what they were taken to be; and thus there was a constant fluctuation between varying concepts of "assimilation." Economic assimilation, for instance, meant only the subordination of the colony, whereas native assimilation meant not so much subordination as equality of development: and frequently, there was the anomaly of an attempted development along both lines at once, until the cleavage was revealed by a threat to the material interests of France, and in particular to those of the French manufacturers.

It is only in the light of these two opposite conceptions and influences that the apparently meaningless *volte-faces* in French policy can be logically

explained: each policy in itself was logical to a certain point, but each proceeded from premises which, while true and acceptable in themselves, by no means considered *every* factor in the situation, and thus, by not being exclusive, admitted of other, and, as often turned out, diametrically opposed, policies. The discrepancies may thus be explained away by remembering the excessive logic of the French spirit, under the influence of which a partly logical development along one line might for the time being overshadow everything else, only to give way to an equally logical but quite incompatible policy. France suffered from logical short-sightedness, and could not perceive anything but the argument which she had adopted for the moment: her policy was not a compromise between differing trends, not an attempt to harmonize as far as possible all the elements in the situation, but a fluctuation between arguments based on partial sets of facts alone. That is why there were many contradictions and little continuity, rather than a progress through compromise. But, all in all, if there was a continual dabbling with the implications of humanitarianism, and a spasmodic attempt at liberalism, the material basis of the French policy was in the idea of "exploitation" and the subordination of the parts to the whole. That concept gave the real unity to the various French policies in the colonial field.

In practice, the organization of the first colonial Empire, and indeed of the second, save for the interim of 1789-1799, took the form of the *Pacte Colonial*.<sup>5</sup> This was simple in its premises. No colony was to indulge in any foreign trade: all colonial products were to go to France: all transport was to be in French hands: and the colonies were to exist only to serve France, although in return their products were to be favoured in the French market. Despite the last-mentioned sop, the essence of the system was clearly monopoly and exclusion, and the colonies were not viewed otherwise than as fields to be exploited, as agencies contributing to French interests. "Perish the colonies," cried even Robespierre after the collapse of the monarchy, "if the colonists wish by menaces to compel us to legislate in *their* interests!" Then, when the colonies held that they must either have slavery again or die, Dupont de Nemours sneeringly replied: "It is better to sacrifice the colonies than a principle!"<sup>6</sup> Even revolutionary France could not conceive of colonial development as something to be fostered in itself, or of the colonies as entities: and the result was that such liberal tendencies as there were in the first flush of revolutionary enthusiasm quickly died out.

<sup>5</sup> Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, Liv. xxi, c. 21. The creed of the *Pacte Colonial* is best summed up in the documents reproduced in Isaac's Report in *Journal Officiel*, doct. parl., sess. ord., Senate, 1888, p. 43, or de Forbonais' article, "Colonie," in *L'Encyclopédie*.

<sup>6</sup> L. Deschamps, *Les Colonies pendant la Revolution* (1898), p. 100 et seq., 128.

The ideas of the *Pacte* were as strongly held as ever, and lasted until the free-trade triumph of 1861. With these new ideas of freedom of commerce, the law of July 17, 1861, allowed a freedom of export and import to the larger colonies, and another five years later introduced a partial fiscal autonomy. Power was given certain colonies (three only, it is true, but then the gain was one of principle) to impose a *douane* or tariff on foreign goods and an *octroi de mer* on all, foreign and French alike. Even Algeria, hitherto rigorously submitted to the exclusionist policy, obtained freedom in 1867; and a general measure of 1868 completely abolished the *Pacte*. The previous measures had secured exceptions for individual colonies, this new decree dealt with all alike. The system of two centuries, therefore, in that it meant a restriction of colonial trade to France alone, was ended; but this did not imply any extension of colonial powers of taxation, and, in most colonies, France still insisted on the practical exclusion of foreign goods by manipulating the tariff. Those privileged colonies in the sugar-islands which had used their new-found privileges to suppress the *douane* and, by making all goods pay the same *octroi*, to remove the protection given French goods, were reminded that their liberties were rather a gesture than powers to be actually exercised: and it was made clear that such an individual rendering had been in no wise contemplated by the framers of the decrees.<sup>7</sup>

By the time of the Third Republic, therefore, the nominal position was that the colonies could trade where they liked, but there was no uniform opinion on the question of the favours to be accorded to French trade with them. The privileged colonies of 1866 could legislate as they pleased, or at least, if they could not openly discriminate against France, they could, by defying the French interpretation of their privileges and insisting on the very letter of their rights, remove the discrimination against foreigners, and this meant a good deal to colonies situated in the Caribbean.

The other colonies were demanding a similar limited autonomy, but, on the other hand, opinion in France was crystallizing against any extension of the privileges of 1866, and indeed, there was a pronounced movement in favour of their repeal. The reforms were now deemed to have been ill-advised and premature, and the French manufacturers, turning from the free-trade ideas of the sixties, and taking into account the rising tide of protectionism, were demanding "tariff assimilation," that is, the consideration of all colonies as merely a prolongation of France, with the consequent discrimination against foreigners. Indeed,

<sup>7</sup> A. Girault, *The Colonial Tariff Policies of France* (1916), p. 76. See pp. 5-7 for the various stages.

it was clearly recognized by this time that the reforms of the sixties, even the abolition of the *Pacte Colonial*, had not been a measure of colonial policy at all, but merely an unexpected and undesirable corollary of the general economic policy of the motherland and of the free-trade treaties of 1860. France had decided for freedom of trade with foreign countries in 1866, and logically this had to extend to the colonies. They had to be given the same privileges as foreign countries, or rather, foreign countries, as a result of treaty agreements, had to be allowed to trade with the colonies. France thus masked an international concession which she could not help, as a measure of colonial liberalism. Hereafter, then, the general idea was not that the colonies were to be treated to the disadvantages of foreign countries and denied their privileges, but that they were parts of France separated from France by a geographical accident, but as much a part of France as if the connecting link had been a land-road instead of a seaway. This applied to goods going to France but not always to goods from France to the colonies, and so the new position came to mean that the colonies received the disadvantages of being part of France without the corresponding advantages.

At this stage of confused tendencies, and fitting in with the general colonial concepts of France, came the protectionist reaction, occasioned by the crisis of 1882. Free-trade in France and in the colonies was definitely opposed, and the newer idea was a narrow customs-union, the peculiarly limited theory of French colonization determining that this should take the form of "assimilation."<sup>8</sup> "Assimilation," as has been previously pointed out, means many things: but, in this fiscal connection, it means such a linking to France that, in theory, a colony was to be treated exactly as a *département*. The French Empire, France and the remotest colony alike, was linked just as was the German *Zollverein* some sixty years previously, with free trade within the union and a rigorous discrimination against the foreigner outside. But there was this significant gap between theory and fact in the French conception,—that France still, although illogically, persisted in taxing certain colonial products on their entry into France. The interests of French manufacturers had brought about the reaction from free-trade, and, just as previously the colonial system had been changed to bring it into conformity with the then new free-trade ideas favoured by French industrialists, so now, with the swing-back to protection in France, there was a corresponding reversal of policy in the colonies. The particular needs and considerations of the colonies counted for absolutely nothing: one fact alone, the position of metropolitan industry, was considered, and, on its needs, policy was determined. As Girault sums up, "the

<sup>8</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Dets., 18/7/91.

colonial consumer was openly sacrificed to the producer of the imperial state"; so too was the colonial producer of raw materials.<sup>9</sup>

The fundamental cause of tariff assimilation, therefore, was the protectionist reaction, strengthened as it was by the crisis of low prices throughout the eighties and by the tariff laws of 1885 and 1887. But there were additional causes, or rather tendencies, working in the same direction, like the above-mentioned reaction against the colonial liberalism of the sixties, for instance. Of the remainder the most noticeable was a revival of the old idea of a complete assimilation, an identity almost, between colonies and mother-country. This idea had been overshadowed during the liberalism of the sixties and the neglect of the seventies, but now it appeared stronger than ever. Two extra-parliamentary commissions (Pothiau's in 1878 and Duclerc's in 1882) vigorously supported assimilation as the basis of all colonial administration,<sup>10</sup> and arguments to the contrary, the arguments of economic statistics in particular, were thrust aside. Nothing could compete with the mechanical logicity of this assimilative principle, because it was simply carrying the idea at the basis of French republicanism to its utmost implications: to argue to the contrary was practically to attack French civilization and reason. Assimilation, so surrounded by protective barriers as to be almost sacrosanct, disposed of its rivals by refusing them a hearing. Granting certain premises, it was a logical consummation, and the position was so interpreted that to question those premises was almost tantamount to treason. France was suffering from a philosophical disease, and could not see the economic facts on the horizon, and the manufacturers took care to prevent those facts from coming within the line of vision.<sup>11</sup>

Then again, the anti-colonial feeling in France worked in the same direction, and at this time took the form of a fear of colonial competition. Ferry interpreted the colonies as meaning new markets and as strengthening to metropolitan industry; while his opponents—and it must be remembered that they completely defeated him in 1885—were obsessed with the opposite theory that colonies, which involved France in so much expenditure both of men and money, meant not markets but new competition. "*Competition* remained the enemy, and the idea that it could come to us in our own colonies, in countries where we were the undisputed masters, seemed especially intolerable."

The policy of tariff assimilation was thus the result of a number of influences. Economic and political theory combined to contribute the ideas of protection and assimilation; and the material interests of the French manufacturers joined with the dominant anti-colonial feeling to

<sup>9</sup> *Compte Rendu des travaux du Congrès des Anciennes Colonies*, 1909, p. 310.

<sup>10</sup> Girault (1916), *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

add the ideas that the colonies should be subordinate and, while in no sense developing so as to become competitors of France, should afford markets for French goods and become reservoirs of raw materials. These ideas were crystallizing throughout the eighties, at which time there was no order in the financial organization of the colonies. The *sénatus-consulte* of 1866, which had stereotyped the principle of autonomy, had been replaced by a decree of November, 1882, which, while ostensibly continuing the autonomy-idea, really allowed a great variety of *régimes* in the various colonies. In this decade, Algeria (1884) and Indo-China (1887) were submitted to the *régime* of assimilation.<sup>12</sup> Products imported into these colonies were subject to the same duties as if they were entering France, and both colonies, the two most flourishing possessions of France overseas, were treated exactly as if they were portions of the mainland territory. Such a triumph for the assimilators really decided the issue, and nothing could check the protectionist movement. The decline of trade in the two colonies already affected was unnoticed, and their financial crises, directly affecting the budgets of both, attributed to other causes.

Hence, the famous law of January 11, 1892, extended this protective principle to be the general basis of French colonial organization<sup>13</sup>; and it is a significant commentary on the state of affairs that it passed unquestioned and almost unnoticed. The conditions at the time of its passing leave no doubt as to the aims of the reformers. Etienne, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, definitely stated in 1891 that the law was based on the idea of colonial subordination. "We do indeed believe, and assert emphatically, that since France must incur the obligations involved in a colonial domain, it is just and proper that this domain should be reserved as a market for French products."<sup>14</sup> A colony was, in essence, a safety-valve for the French manufacturer. The stress was entirely on the French industrialists, and the colonies, in no sense entities in themselves, and in no sense viewed as having, or as likely to have, developments of their own, were looked on simply as an element in the general problem confronting French industry. Accordingly, 107 Chambers of Commerce were consulted before the passage of the law, but not one colonial! And advice was asked of 66 Chambers of Art and Manufactures, and of 817 companies and professional chambers, but not of the governors and councils and planters' associations of the colonies. Even the Under-Secretary of the Colonies was not con-

<sup>12</sup> *Journal Officiel*, 30/12/84, 12/2/87. See *Recueil des Délibérations du Congrès Colonial National*, 1889-1890, Vol. II, pp. 230, 345.

<sup>13</sup> See Thomson's report in *Journal Officiel*, doc. parl., sess. ord. 1891, p. 877. Debates are in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 18/7/91, the final law in 12/1/92.

<sup>14</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Senate, 18/12/91.

sulted! As was the case with the free-trade policy in the sixties, this was not a colonial measure but a metropolitan one: it affected the colonies, but was determined by and for the interests of France.

Indeed, the striking feature of the situation was the uniformity of opinion on the matter. It is true that the colonial societies and their organs of *L'Afrique Française* and *La Quinzaine Coloniale* were just being formed in these years, and that there was no adequate voicing of colonial interests: but the colonial party, such as it existed at the time, joined with the anti-colonials in supporting the measure; and thus there was a united opinion, either from conviction or indifference or a feeling that a blow was being dealt to the colonies. Even Ferry's party, despite the warning note of Ferry himself, supported it, indeed practically originated it. Easterners as they were, they were demanding some recompense for the credits they had voted for the expansionist policy. The colonies might suffer, they saw, but that was inevitable, and only just, for had not France suffered in establishing them? With this point of view, of course, the opponents of colonial expansion agreed. But the great majority of parliamentarians were frankly indifferent. The *Journal Officiel*, reporting the debates on the question, contains no striking speeches on either side, and there is practically no suggestion that the policy might benefit the colonies. To the contrary, even the supporters of colonial expansion, Etienne for instance, construed it as rather a blow to the colonies, but a blow necessitated by the demands of the mother-country. There could be no clearer proof than the events leading to this Act of the centripetal nature of French colonial policy, and the unquestioned subordination of the colonies to France.<sup>15</sup>

The particular problem was to make the colonies buy French goods. Most colonial products, save in the Oriental markets of Indo-China, naturally gravitated towards France: the difficulty was that the colonists looked elsewhere for their purchases. The framers of the Act of 1892 tried, therefore, to prevent this, and, once having linked the colonies to France by narrow tariff bonds, and having prevented them buying elsewhere, taxed certain of their products on entering France. Securing the colonial import-trade to French manufacturers by tariff boundaries against foreigners would improve the balance of French trade, and to tax the more lucrative colonial products in entering France—a safe procedure seeing that they could not go elsewhere,—would be a direct return for the expenditure the colonies had involved for France. The French manufacturers and the French State would both benefit by the protectionist *régime* thus imposed.

To secure this result, the law declared "tariff assimilation" to be

<sup>15</sup> Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, pp. 309-310.

the rule and "tariff autonomy" the exception for those cases where geographical conditions clearly made assimilation out of the question. But, in ordinary conditions, a colony was to be "assimilated." That is, the import trade of the colonies was to be reserved to the French by imposing the general tariff of France on foreign goods. Goods from France or any other French colony entered free: they could no longer be taxed by the individual colony, as had been possible under the "autonomy" régime of 1866. On the other hand, all foreign products were to pay just as if they were entering France. The "old colonies" could no longer, as they had done in the late sixties, admit foreign goods on the same terms as French, for, hereafter, there was to be a distinct discrimination against the foreigner.<sup>16</sup> The policy was clearly to make the colonies French markets.

But at this point the considerations of logic gave place to those of finance. When dealing with colonial imports, it had been argued that, since the colonies were parts of France, goods entering the colonies should be treated as if they were entering France. Had logic been the only factor taken into account, the corollary of this argument would have been that colonial exports were to enter France free of duty. The colonies were parts of France, ran the former argument: colonial imports should be treated as French imports: logically, therefore, colonial exports should have been treated as French exports and given the right of free entry into France, just as French exports were admitted into the colonies free of duty. But this was not conceded, and here entered the second French argument that the colonies should pay for the sacrifices entailed in their acquisition. The general principle, it is true, was allowed, since it could not very well be denied; but the lucrative tax on certain colonial products, such as tea and coffee and cocoa, was retained.<sup>17</sup>

By reason of this abandonment of the logical implications of assimilation, the policy of 1892 meant in practice that the colonies lost the advantages of free-trade with foreign countries and received in return a limited freedom of exchange with France, but with the limits so manipulated as to exclude certain of their products from the advantages of the compromise. On the whole, by this law, the colonies lost the freedom of the "autonomy" régime of the sixties, lost the advantages of foreign trade, and obtained nothing in return save the right of free-entry of their minor products into France. The important exports, sugar in particular, continued to be penalized as before. "Tariff assimilation" was indeed an ingenious revival of the *Pacte Colonial* under the guise of

<sup>16</sup> See details in *Régime Douanier des Colonies Françaises* (1924), p. 7 et seq., published by Institut Colonial de Marseille,

<sup>17</sup> Section 3, Part 2 of law of 11/1/92.

logic : it meant added taxation and discrimination against the colonies without any reciprocal advantage to them. It was, in essence, a new burden, and the crowning illogicality was to term this so-called logical system "assimilation." Goods came to the colonies as they did to the Midi or to Auvergne, but did products of the Midi or Auvergne pay on entering Paris as did colonial goods? Assimilation was the theory, but discrimination and subordination the practice.

This policy applied to most of the colonies, the exceptions being West Africa, the Congo, and Oceania, in all of which geographical considerations clearly precluded the enforcement of a tariff, and were reinforced by international agreements in so far as the Congo was concerned. Each of these colonies had a separate *régime*, but there was unity in so far as all of their products were taxed on entering France. In theory at least, free entry was the rule for the products of the assimilated colonies, but even this was not conceded to the non-assimilated ones, for whose goods free entry was the exception rather than the rule. As a compensation, however, French products paid import-duties on entering non-assimilated colonies, whereas they entered assimilated regions free.

It is evident, therefore, that the point of view behind the law of 1892 was not imperial but narrowly metropolitan. It was a reversion from the liberal tendencies of the sixties back to the idea of the *Pacte*, and meant a stereotyping of the principle of colonial subordination, and indeed a partial ban on colonial development. "In a good colonial organization," ran the official explanation of certain tariff propositions of 1900, "colonial production must be limited to furnishing to the metropolis raw materials or products which we do not produce. But if, going beyond this function, colonial production attempts to make a ruinous competition with ours, it becomes a dangerous adversary."<sup>18</sup> Again and again, this *motif* reappears, so much so that, paradoxical as it may seem, the very development of the colonies since the law of 1892 has aroused considerable misgiving in France. It was the old conflict over again, with metropolitan and colonial theories clearly ranged one against the other. In other words, the law of 1892 represented centripetal tendencies, and the colonial development, despite the burdens of that law, centrifugal.

Whether the law succeeded or not is a difficult question, because there are so many points of approach. The most obvious conclusion is that it failed to prevent the rise of a distinct colonial attitude and policy, apart from, or even perchance opposed to, that of France. In 1892, the colonies had been inarticulate, and the principle of the law was that they should remain so, and that metropolitan interests alone

<sup>18</sup> Propositions of Krantz in *L'Afrique Française*, Feb. 1900, p. 37, or *Congrès des Anciennes Colonies*, 1909, p. 309.

should be considered. But this position was seen to be untenable. The colonies asserted themselves by a process of natural growth and, ironically enough, this growth was fostered, almost as much as it was impeded, by the operation of the "assimilation" principle. At the time of the law of 1892 there had really been no colonial *bloc*. West Africa was still a series of disconnected coastal-posts with not the slightest semblance of cohesion: the Congo as a colony meant a handful of trading-posts in Gabun: Madagascar had not yet been conquered: Tunisia was undergoing organization: Algeria, paralysed by the system of *rattachements* (control from Paris) and administered as a *département* of France under the Minister of the Interior, was stagnant and viewed as being outside the range of the colonies: the old sugar-colonies were moribund, having no answer to the menace of beet-sugar or the labour-shortage: the Pacific islands knew neither energy nor organization; but only a drugged apathy of insouciance: and Indo-China, where as yet there was no union, resolved itself into a bankrupt and unpopular Tonkin and a notoriously corrupt Cochin-China. Nowhere was there a really bright spot, nowhere was there a distinctly colonial point of view, and nowhere, save perhaps vaguely in Etienne's mind, was there the concept that the colonies were a coherent organism of their own. The time of the real importance of the colonies, and of the real study of the colonial question, had not yet dawned. Indeed, the very phrase, "the colonial question," had no significance in the France of 1892, for the colonies were not yet an entity so much as a completely unrelated *congeries* of scattered possessions, divided between three ministries, and most of them heavy responsibilities.

But the expansionist policy of 1894-1906, aided as it was by the reaction against both economic and political assimilation, galvanized the colonies into activity, and gave birth to "the colonial question." This was the more obvious when the concession of budgetary autonomy in 1900 and the natural development during the period of consolidation which followed the conquest hastened the emergence of what might be called the economic personality of each colony. Indeed, the law of 1892, by throwing each colony upon itself, played no little part in bringing about this development. That accounts for the apparent anomaly that instead of crushing out the nascent colonial industries, this law directly fostered their growth,—a growth which came to be strengthened and to increase almost *pari passu* with metropolitan antagonism. When vine-planting commenced on the Antananarivo plateau in Madagascar, the deputies of the French vigneronns demanded its cessation; when the husking of rice and the fabrication of cloth-goods started in Indo-China, Governor and Colonial Office and Parliament alike opposed it; when the

Dakar railway company in Senegal proposed to use ground-nuts as fuel in place of dear coal, the Marseilles soapmakers protested against the increased price of their raw materials so effectively as to kill the new project ; and even a partial revival of the cane-sugar industry in the West Indies was killed by a similar opposition. But all of these antagonisms alike had the effect of defining and strengthening the colonial view-point, until it was characterized by an assertiveness and dogmatism unknown, indeed inconceivable, in 1892. The view-point of that year, in a word, electrified the scattered interests of the colonies into coherency, and, with coherency, power.

But this did not imply a triumph of those interests. Their presence added a new factor to the situation and assured a consideration being afforded to the colonial point of view. No future Act could be passed over their heads, as was the law of 1892 : legislation hereafter might be against their wishes, but those wishes and arguments would be clearly expressed, for the colonies had gained articulation.<sup>19</sup> Despite this, however, and perhaps largely because of it, metropolitan interests continued to be in the ascendant, and the law of 1892 still remains the basis of the economic organization of the French colonies, although no longer the sole factor in the situation, as it was when introduced. From the metropolitan point of view, the very rise of a colonial industry, apart from metropolitan industry, is the best proof of the logic of their claims in 1892, and makes their attitude more dogmatic, just as it did that of the colonies.

From the purely economic point of view, the framers of the Act claim that " tariff assimilation " has been a success. They point to the position of the colonies then and now, and attribute the obvious development in the interim to the operation of the Act. They show that colonial trade increased from 899 million francs in 1887 to 2,096 millions in 1907, and that every colony, except the old sugar-islands, have contributed to the general increase. But this line of argument is somewhat fallacious, because the causal relationship in question is not proved. The development might have been due in part or whole to quite other causes, indeed may have been in spite of " tariff assimilation " ; and, moreover, there is no evidence to show that a similar or perchance a greater development might have taken place even had there been no assimilation. A closer analysis supports and even strengthens this opposite conclusion, and shows the protectionist argument to be ill-founded. As was often pointed out, West Africa and Indo-China and Madagascar, which were practically

<sup>19</sup> For instance, powerful colonial congresses in 1906, 1907, 1909, 1912, 1921 and 1925 opposed the law, and the Institut Colonial de Marseille was directly inaugurated to further this end.

non-existent at the time of the law of 1892, have contributed most of the increase, and the colonies affected by the assimilation *régime* have not prospered as much as the free colonies like West Africa and Morocco.

A detailed survey of the colonies since 1892 supports the position that "tariff assimilation," if it has not failed, has at least been a retarding influence. It has kept back the colonies under its regulations as compared with others<sup>20</sup>: it has not increased the share of France in colonial imports to any marked degree: and it has imposed growing burdens on the colonies and their development. Instead of converting the colonies into markets for French goods, assimilation has often raised prices up to that level at which foreign goods could compete (in New Caledonia, for instance): or, where geographical conditions have forced the colonies to take French products (as in Madagascar and the sugar-islands), the consumer has had to pay more, and the resultant redistribution of the capital in each colony, and the limits imposed on the total trade turnover, have gravely diminished the budget-receipts. One cannot point to any individual colony and say that, *there*, assimilation has directly benefited the colony to a greater degree than free-trade would have done; and the statistics show, on the other hand, that what development there has been has taken place not because of, but in spite of, the application of the extreme protectionist system. The development has been a tribute rather to the resources of the colony in question than to the wisdom of the metropolitan fiscal policy. The justice of this contention is seen from the fact that the only colonies which have been able to recover from the blow have been the larger ones, with their greater natural resources: the smaller ones, having no such reserves on which to draw, have been simply ruined. For them, in Girault's phrase, "tariff assimilation was deliberately devised misery."<sup>21</sup>

There is practically no exception to the statement that assimilation ruined the lesser colonies of France. St. Pierre et Miquelon, a tiny peninsula on the Canadian coast, by being artificially isolated from the American continent and placed under rules made for France, lost two-thirds of its trade and a third of its population in twenty years of the new *régime*, and had to be "unassimilated" in 1911, as the only alternative was extinction.<sup>22</sup> The sugar-islands of the Caribbean were in a similar plight and for similar reasons, as they naturally fell within the orbit of

<sup>20</sup> *Congrès des Anciennes Colonies*, 1909, p. 318; Mathon's *Report to Congrès Colonial de Marseilles*, 1906.

<sup>21</sup> See detailed analysis in Girault (1916), *op. cit.*, p. 174 *et seq.*, or *Compte Rendu des Travaux du Congrès des Anciennes Colonies*, 1906, tariff section, p. 215 *et seq.*; or *Congrès de l'Institut Colonial de Marseille*, 1925, p. 51 *et seq.*

<sup>22</sup> *Congrès des Anciennes Colonies*, 1909, p. 351 *et seq.*; *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 24/3/11, 4/7/11.

the American market. Hard-hit as they already were by the competition of beet-sugar, they have remained stagnant since 1890, only the intrinsic richness of the groups preventing a positive decline. The only result of "tariff assimilation" there has been to increase French imports by one-third at the cost of a corresponding increase in prices, which entailed a reduction of the total amount of trade (nearly a 50 per cent. fall between 1888 and 1907), and a consequent falling-off of budget-receipts. The general equilibrium of colonial existence in Martinique and Guadeloupe was upset by a disturbing influence at one stage, and consequently the whole movement was deranged.<sup>23</sup> Even an official report of 1911 made this clear in saying that, "while, thanks to the customs duties, foreign merchandise is practically ousted from the local market, the budget of the colony is becoming impoverished." This in turn meant new taxes and more mulcting of the producer,—so much so that relief had to be afforded in 1914 by admitting the island-sugar into France free of duty, a concession which really meant that, to maintain her protectionist policy at one end, France had to give large bounties at the other.<sup>24</sup> In the Pacific, New Caledonia told a similar tale, and indeed suffered more than any other colony except St. Pierre et Miquelon. The island has a sub-temperate climate and can be settled by Europeans, and its conditions are very similar to those of the adjacent Australian mainland, with which it naturally trades. Assimilation of this isolated island at the Antipodes meant a great increase in the cost of living, because the colonists had to pay for Australian products plus the duty, as France could not supply the necessary commodities. Without in the least aiding French imports, assimilation here has increased the burdens of the settlers and has simply meant an insensate handicap on the development of a new country. But France would not face the obvious facts, and, despite a proposed change in 1912, has continued to sacrifice this temperate colony at the altar of an inapplicable principle.<sup>25</sup>

The lesson of all the lesser colonies is alike, but it should be remembered that all of them are so situated geographically (all are really isolated *enclaves* attached to, and meaningless apart from, foreign economic spheres), as to afford no real test for the policy of "tariff assimilation": they only afford another proof of the illogical nature of French colonial methods. So it is only by examining the larger colonies, which are economic entities in themselves, that valid conclusions may be reached. On the other hand, the smaller colonies are important, as showing the interpretation given to the theory. Ferry, at once a protectionist and a

<sup>23</sup> *Institut Colonial de Marseille. Congrès Douanier Colonial, 1925, p. 428.*

<sup>24</sup> Girault (1916), *op. cit.*, p. 174 *et seq.*

<sup>25</sup> Paper by Simon in *Congrès des Anciennes Colonies, 1909, p. 234.*

colonial, had supported the law of 1892 only because the power it conferred of making exceptions to the rule gave it the necessary elasticity in operation. "It has never entered the mind of any reasonable man," he said at the time of the passage of the law, "to transport the tariffs of the metropolis *en bloc* to this distant domain, scattered in all parts of the world and in all habitable latitudes. That is a caricature of the new régime, and not a healthy and loyal application of it."<sup>26</sup> And yet the above instances show that that is precisely what happened, and that the emphasis came to be on a rigid application of the general principle,—on a grotesque caricature, in fact. Ferry's idea had been to compensate for the accidents of geographical disadvantages by allowing exemptions from the general rule: whereas in actual practice, France ignored these disadvantages and allowed no exemption unless, as in Oceania, geography made the collection of customs an absolute absurdity. The law of 1892 knew, and knows, no elasticity: it was not a flexible link easing with the course of development and the peculiar conditions of each colony, but a rigid iron band forbidding all adaptation to changing circumstances.

Of the larger colonies, Madagascar is perhaps the most typical, because, assimilated in 1897, two years after its conquest, it has practically been under the assimilation régime throughout the whole of its existence. Here, the most obvious result of the system was definitely to capture the island's trade for France. It is true that the gain was rather to France's pride than to either French traders or the natives, because the heavy tariffs have hindered the development of commerce. As Girault says, clearly "the economic policy of France in Madagascar aimed far more at supplanting the English trade than at developing the external commerce of the colony."<sup>27</sup> The result was that trade was practically stagnant for the ten years after 1897, although France came to have two-thirds of the exports and practically the whole of the import trade. But, apart from the inordinately slow development, what was the cost of this victory? Customs receipts rapidly fell, because there were no foreign goods coming in, and French goods did not pay duty: therefore, there had to be additional taxation. And, as these were consumption-taxes, falling on French and foreign goods alike, the cost of living rose rapidly. Madagascar was following a vicious circle: natives, colonists, and government all suffered, and the development of the group was restricted, the only profit accruing to the French cotton-manufacturers. Clearly, if Madagascar represented a victory for the protectionists, it was a Pyrrhic one, and it would have been infinitely

<sup>26</sup> In Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> Girault (1916), *op. cit.*, p. 216 *et seq.*; *Compte Rendu du Congrès Colonial de Marseille*, 1906, Vol. II, p. 206 (July).

cheaper for the French Government to have given a free gift to the cotton-manufacturers of their profits, for, as cotton-fabrics comprise 50 per cent. of the imports of Madagascar, they would have had the compensation of a prospering country.<sup>28</sup>

Indo-China did not suffer as much as Madagascar, largely because of the proximity of China and the dependence of the country on the single staple of rice.<sup>29</sup> Under the circumstances, "tariff assimilation" was not so much a mortal blow as an annoying hindrance to be overcome. Indo-Chinese native tastes being as they are, the country is largely an economic world in itself: internal trade is all that concerns the average Annamite: he buys few foreign goods, and so is little, if at all, affected by the duty and the subsequent rise of prices. He simply goes without. For the rest, the bulk of the exports (rice and silk) go to China, and thus French tariffs could not adversely affect the colony as they did, say, the sugar-islands. The self-sufficiency of the Indo-Chinese world triumphed over French protection. Nor did the State suffer because, the taxation system being based on indirect taxes and an *ad val.* basis, receipts varied with imports: and these continually increased,—fivefold between 1888 and 1911,—because the general prosperity of the native was increasing with the development under the French. The import-duty, under these conditions, was simply a fair tax; it was instead of, and not supplementary to, direct taxes. Local conditions and Doumer's system of indirect taxes, therefore, prevented the stagnation that was inevitable in the other colonies. But how much more or less the gain would have been under a free-trade system is a moot point: certainly, France has not captured this import market, for her share rose only from a fifth to a third of the whole (1888–1911), and a great proportion of this included material for the ambitious programme of public works after 1898. As in Madagascar, the only positive gain was in capturing the textile-trade for the French; and to offset this, Indo-China, more so than any other colony, was roused to antagonistic activity by the French tariff, and vigorously developed her own industries, especially in Tonkin.<sup>30</sup> France fully paid for the small trade advantage by the pin-pricks given to the natives, and by the awakening of the teeming millions of slumbering Annamites into a passive resistance. Moreover, as minor but troublesome additions to this side of the ledger, were the handicaps imposed on the great port of Saigon, the question of smuggling through Laos, the friction

<sup>28</sup> A. Artaud, *Introduction à la Révision du Régime Douanier des Colonies Françaises* (1925), p. 38, published by Institut Colonial de Marseille; *Congrès du Régime Douanier Colonial*, 1925, p. 51 *et seq.*

<sup>29</sup> R. Ferry, *Le Régime Douanier de l'Indo-Chine* (1912), p. 36 *et seq.*

<sup>30</sup> Artaud (1925), *op. cit.*, p. 24 *et seq.*; *Congrès du Régime Douanier Colonial*, 1925, p. 485. The valuable Sambric Report on Indo-China is in p. 470.

with Siam and China, and a retarded development of the waterways of the peninsula. But, at most, the loss was potential rather than actual, and certainly the natives did not suffer under the system.

From this survey, it is clear that none of the assimilated colonies could be adduced as a direct protectionist triumph, with a prosperity at least equal to that which could reasonably have been expected under a free-trade *régime*. On the other hand, the two non-assimilated territories of West Africa and Morocco were definite free-trade victories. West Africa was in much the same position as Indo-China,—a rich, well-peopled, self-sufficient land. Once the separatism of the coastal districts had been dispelled by the occupation of the common *hinterland* and the essential unity of West Africa revealed, progress was rapid and consistent, commerce almost quadrupling in the fifteen years after 1895. Both French and foreign trade have increased proportionately, the share of France, a half of both exports and imports, remaining in 1910 what it was in 1895. The commercial liberty of West Africa has thus benefited both French and foreigners, the increase being more noticeable than in the case of Madagascar, and relatively even than that of Indo-China. No other colony presented a similar expansion of trade: the natives prospered: customs revenues doubled between 1904 and 1911: and there was a healthy outlook in every direction, an outlook based on the firm foundation of numerous agricultural staples. Again, despite the failure to capture the textile market, that bourne so consistently sought in French colonization, the French industrialists gained to a greater total amount, and at least to a greater degree, relatively, than other Powers or in most of the assimilated colonies. The gains, that is, were evenly distributed, and there was no reverse side to the medal, as there was in the case even of the successful assimilated colonies.

The lesson of Morocco was even clearer; because there, France had not only to face "the open door," but the firmly entrenched position of England. Yet the total trade increased sixfold between 1900 and 1912; the exports gained on the imports; Morocco became the third of the French colonies from the point of view of trade (despite the continued uncertainty and the independence of at least a third of the country); and France came to control 64·5 per cent. of the imports and 52·4 per cent. of the exports (1925), an increase of almost 50 per cent. since 1912,—satisfactory results from any approach to the question.

The conclusion, then, is that the assimilated colonies were either held back or ruined, save where they had a natural richness sufficient to counteract the blows of "tariff assimilation"; while, on the other hand, the non-assimilated colonies (save for the completely undeveloped Congo,

the Cinderella of the French colonies) uniformly progressed.<sup>31</sup> It is not clear whether a moderate protectionist policy, as in Indo-China, would have produced similar results to the free-trade policy; but it can with certainty be said the assimilated colonies would not have been so backward under a *régime* of trade liberty. Construed as a rigidly inflexible and extreme protectionism, "tariff assimilation" undoubtedly hampered the development of the French colonies. It almost invariably produced stagnation, and, save in Madagascar, the French lacked even the satisfaction of capturing the desired markets. In general, there was a small increase, but the policy usually meant that the colonist or native still went to the foreigner and paid the duty as an extra tax restricting his purchases in other directions. The only absolute gain was to the French textile-industry, and this was dearly bought. Apart from this purely local gain, the policy hindered development and secured no adequate result.

It could not be said, therefore, that "tariff assimilation" had succeeded, nor that France had even gained the colonial markets, at however sacrificial a cost. Before assimilation, she commanded 40 per cent. of the import-trade of her colonies, and by 1913 this had increased to only 54.5 per cent., and the ratio was declining. France had neglected the geographical factors of the situation, and had forgotten that Indo-China naturally falls within the economic zone of China, the Antilles in America, New Caledonia in Australia, and Madagascar in Africa. This fact of geographical propinquity not all the protectionist systems in the world could overcome: and when France moulded the whole of her colonial system on an uncompromising denial of the implications of this geographical fact, she was condemning her colonies to comparative stagnation. One fact alone—the needs of the manufacturers of the east of France—had been taken into account, and the whole French Empire had to pay the cost.

So clear was the situation when colonial facts came to be studied scientifically in the later nineties that there was a definite reaction against the ultra-protectionist system, the modified *Pacte Colonial*, on which the *régime* of "tariff assimilation" was based. Quite apart from general arguments in Paris on the plane of abstract economics, the deciding factors came from the development of the colonies themselves. The rapid growth from the nineties onwards made changes of organization inevitable, and, from 1892 at least, there was a distinct movement for decentralization along the lines of budgetary autonomy, a trend which naturally came to involve tariff autonomy. The first gap in the system

<sup>31</sup> This is the conclusion of Girault (1916, p. 280) and each of the Congresses cited above.

of "tariff assimilation" was made when it was recognized that the individual colony had a sufficiently separate existence to justify a local budget, especially with a people like the French, the whole of whose colonial system had been built on a negation of centrifugal and decentralizing tendencies.<sup>32</sup> This recognition was undoubtedly the turning-point in the economic history of the French colonies, as its cession opened up vistas of reform which, carried to their logical implications, would transform the entire colonial system.

The movement for financial autonomy was in itself an old one. Genty de Bussy, in the report of the Algerian Commission of 1833, had proposed a special budget, and, from that year, the sugar-colonies (save for the assimilation interlude of 1841-1854) had a budget of their own, voted by the colonial council. At this early stage, the idea was clearly not to develop the colonies but to save France expense, and it was not until the law of April 13, 1900, that the principle itself was conceded, and from the colony's point of view. In introducing the new project, Joseph Caillaux, the Minister of Finance, held that each colony should be considered "as a distinct unit, having its own resources and its own interests, and becoming organized in proportion to the extent of its development."<sup>33</sup> Granting this premise, economic autonomy in every branch was only a matter of time, for Caillaux's declaration really amounted to a recognition of the principle of a progressive self-government in economic matters. Hereafter, the colony was an economic entity, paying all save its military expenses and managing its own financial life: and, conceding this, tariff autonomy was logically inevitable. Either the idea of 1892 or that of 1900 was erroneous, for the implications of both could not logically be carried out. The underlying principles were diametrically opposed: decentralization and economic autonomy were meaningless if, at the same time, centripetal tendencies and the economic subordination of 1892 were upheld. France, by sanctioning both, had to choose between them, and the point was that, while the interests of the mother-country had been taken into account both in 1892 and 1900, the colonies had really been non-existent as distinct units at the former date, but had so developed in the interim that their interests and demands were clear.

At the same time as the decentralizing tendency was growing in the economic sphere, a reaction could be discerned against the system of extreme protection in itself. This found its first coherent expression in the resolutions of the Colonial Congress of 1906, which declared against

<sup>32</sup> *Le Matin* (Paris), 6/8/09.

<sup>33</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 17/5/99, 15/12/99, for debates. See Chap. XVI, III, *infra*.

any attempt to lock up colonial markets.<sup>34</sup> Clementel, Caillaux, Guieysse, and Deloncle, all authorities of note, said that the colonies were dying because they were being linked to France too closely. "Their organs are constricted by the tight corset of ultra-protectionism," cried Clementel, and his protests found an even more unanimous support at the Congress of the Old Colonies in 1909. This Congress openly claimed a tariff autonomy, or at least reciprocity, because the existing system was worse than the old *Pacte Colonial*.<sup>35</sup> The *Pacte* at least was a contract, and gave the colonies a market for their goods: the "tariff assimilation" of 1892, because, as has been seen, it stopped short of that complete reciprocity which alone was logical or just, did not, and was decried as being based on a colonial ideal more backward and more incomplete even than that of Montesquieu and the Physiocrats! Then again, its rigidity and uniformity were quite impractical policies in an Empire as scattered as that of France. "Its uniformity," reported the president of the tariff section at the Conference of 1909, "is an absurd thing, and to wish the *régime* of 1892 to be applied to French colonies in all latitudes, is as logical as if we were to decree to-day that all Frenchmen should wear a *coutil* in winter in our equatorial colonies!" Variation, according to the position and requirements of each colony, was demanded as the basis of any workable system: to argue otherwise was to sacrifice fact to theory, and to base the policy on what was desired rather than what was possible.

Most reformers did not want to force the pace, and stopped short of hastening to a complete "autonomy" or independence, economically speaking: what they wanted was a policy varying between the colonies and proportioned to the peculiarities of each. Whether the policy was determined by the Paris *bureaux* or the local councils was more or less immaterial. The source of the policy did not count, so long as it was one based on a recognition that each colony was an entity in itself, and had special problems of its own. The move was mainly away from the rigidity of the existing law, which obviously could not be a correct or just solution for so many radically different problems: and it was towards some *via media* which, while satisfying the homeland and proving at least palatable to the colonies, should vary between colony and colony. The entire emphasis was on the difference between the colonies and not the massing of all of them in the generic term "colonies," which, under the conditions, meant nothing, except a proof that the position was misunderstood. The only feature in common in the economic life of New Caledonia and the French Congo and Indo-China was the tricolour;

<sup>34</sup> *Compte Rendu du Congrès Colonial de Marseille, 1906, Vol. II.*

<sup>35</sup> *Congrès des Anciennes Colonies, 1909, p. 323 et seq.*

and the reformers argued that a more satisfactory basis of organization than the existing one could be found.

To show that they wanted a recognition of the variations between the colonies, and yet were not enamoured of extreme or impolitic schemes of autonomy, the colonial representatives coined the ingenious phrase, "tariff personality," to represent the goal they sought. The law of 1900 had given financial personality (without a complete financial independence): why, therefore, could not the law be changed so as to allow a tariff-personality, which was distinct from "tariff autonomy," a goal obviously beyond the needs of the early twentieth century, when the interests of the central French organism had to be taken into account so much.

The view-point of the reformers and their economic arguments were best summed up by the declarations of the Colonial Congress of Marseilles in 1906, the best documented and most convincing work on the economic organization of the colonies. The Congress agreed <sup>36</sup>—and this still represents the present situation—that

"the best *régime* to adopt would be that which—

- "1. Would renounce the unification and systematic centralization which the experience of the application of the 1892 law has shown impossible of realization.
- "2. Would definitely abandon the false principle of the economic subordination of the colonies to the metropolis, in recognizing that the true interest of the metropolis lay in the economic development of the colonies.
- "3. Would decree the autonomy of each colony or group of colonies from an economic point of view, and would regulate their tariff-*régime* to their best interests by considering the reforms and conditions enumerated:—
  - "A. Hearing the colony's claims for the measures and taxes which it deems the most favourable for the development of its wealth.
  - "B. The granting of these measures by the metropolis in decrees, while reserving to the metropolis her general economic interests.
  - "C. Fixing a certain period for the *régime* thus established, in order to allow the measures to take full effect, and to enable those interested to profit from them as much as possible.
- "4. Would permit the small colonies, by groupings in governments-general, to preserve local influences in claiming the measures and taxes most suitable for the development of their resources."

Behind this somewhat cumbrous terminology, it will be noted that there is nothing unduly iconoclastic or visionary: indeed, the recommendations do not go beyond the fields of variation and reciprocity,—a commendable restraint which was the best proof of the validity of the

<sup>36</sup> *Compte Rendu du Congrès Colonial de Marseille*, 1906, Vol. II, app. x.; or *Congrès du Régime Douanier Colonial*, 1925, p. 289.

reformers' position. This general position was supported by the Colonial Congress of Bordeaux in 1907, by the above-mentioned Congress of the Old Colonies in 1909, by the various Chambers of Commerce, and by the vociferous colonial party.<sup>37</sup> As a result, an extra-parliamentary commission was appointed in 1909, but after many delays the Carrière Report, giving its conclusions, declared in favour of assimilation as the guiding principle. It will be remembered that this was in the midst of the period of lethargy, and it was not politic to attempt any root-and-branch reforms of the colonial organization at this juncture.<sup>38</sup> But, as a counterblast to this anæmic report, the Paris Chamber of Commerce, in a carefully worded resolution, opposed assimilation, both politically and economically, and, maintaining that "the régime of 1892 has checked the development of the colonies and has impoverished them," outlined a policy akin to what has been called "tariff personality."<sup>39</sup>

The position thus arrived at, from the colonial point of view, was the more obvious because the bases of the metropolitan argument had crumbled; and thus there was, as it were, an internal as well as external attack on the assimilation régime. The law of 1892 had been built on the twin foundations of colonial subordination and assimilation in every branch; and, of these two, the first had been at least somewhat limited by the new self-assertion of the colonies, and the latter had absolutely broken down. Assimilation, both as regards political and native affairs, had been revealed as a complete failure, as unworkable in practice as it was undesirable in theory. Therefore, since economic assimilation had been introduced largely as a corollary of these two, and on the same philosophical basis, one of its main justifications was now removed, and the position was that, if the policy did not square with the facts, then it had no more *raison d'être* than any other policy. It had, in a word, lost its wider philosophical support, and its fate had now to be decided in the more controversial world of economic facts and statistics. Thus, just as political assimilation was seen to be shackling and unwise, and just as native assimilation was shown as an unrealizable chimera, so now economic assimilation was revealed as the reverse of logical, and, while not impracticable in itself, unwise for all concerned.<sup>40</sup> The assimilation trilogy, beautifully symmetrical triumph of the combined logic and philosophy of the revolutionary reformer as it was, simply fell apart and dissolved, as its basis could not find a support in hard fact.

<sup>37</sup> The conclusions of all are given in *Congrès du Régime Douanier Colonial*, 1925, p. 289 *et seq.*

<sup>38</sup> This report of 8/8/10 is in Artaud (1925), *op. cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>39</sup> In Girault (1916), p. 145. Compare *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 4/4/11, for Thierry's attacks.

<sup>40</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 16/6/11, 18/12/12 (Thierry, a deputy of Marseilles).

After the strictures of the Colonial Congress of 1900, the French Empire was no longer viewed as a great amorphous mass to be organized into a symmetrical uniformity, but as a union of distinct parts, different, and desirably different, between themselves, especially from an economic point of view. How, therefore, could one rigid and inflexible tariff system apply with equal fairness to a loose union of such disparate parts? Logic pointed in exactly the opposite direction, and, as the basic premises of the French colonial syllogism had thus changed, so too did the entire chain of argument. Assimilation was discredited, and the political and economic theorists, the slaves of logic, tended more and more to emphasize variation within the central organization.

All of these tendencies united in a demand for change,<sup>41</sup>—a demand which was just becoming effective when the war of 1914 changed the situation. The first victory was when the “half-duties” imposed on the goods of the sugar-colonies (sugar, tea, coffee, etc.) were abolished in August, 1913.<sup>42</sup> The planters objected to being “treated as French when they buy and as half-French when they sell.” But the significant feature was not so much the passage of the law as the strength of the opposition to it. It was only after the fourth attempt that even this meagre concession was obtained, and financial experts and liberal economists joined in opposing it.<sup>43</sup> The result was that a kindred proposition to relieve the distressed New Caledonia by “unassimilating” it was rejected outright, and the adherents of assimilation proposed to follow up this victory by even swelling the ranks of the assimilated colonies by adding Senegal and Guinea.

Despite the experience of Morocco, the reformers were thus effectively checkmated, and the issue was still undecided in 1914, although the theory of colonial subordination remained in the ascendant. The colonies, developed as they were, were still conceived to derive their economic life from France, and the old ghost of colonial competition had in no sense been laid. “Industrial colonization,” that is, the manufacturing of raw materials within the colonies themselves, was still anathema, and the pronouncements of policy on the topic might equally as well, (as in 1892), have been uttered by Diderot or Montesquieu. For instance, in 1905, Doumer, an ex-Governor-General of Indo-China and an advanced radical, said that “the installation of industries must only be encouraged there to the extent to which they can do no harm to metropolitan industries. The latter must be complemented and not ruined by the former. In

<sup>41</sup> See the documents in Artaud (1925), *op. cit.*, Chap. 8, from each colony.

<sup>42</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 6/8/13, for bill. Smaller victories had previously been obtained by bills of 24/3/10 and 31/3/11. See Artaud (1925), pp. 155-158.

<sup>43</sup> Compare attacks in *Paris Temps*, 19, 21/12/12; 4, 13/2/13.

other words, colonial industry is to do what French industry cannot do,—to send products where metropolitan industry cannot go.”<sup>44</sup> The colonial theory of 1914 could not be more aptly summarized.

There was still as much centralization in policy as there had been twenty years before, at the dawn of the expansionist period, and the only difference was that, whereas formerly the idea was to benefit the mother-country alone, it was now conceded that the benefit might be reciprocal. But still, the assumption was that the first obligation was to aid the mother-country. The theory of colonial parasitism had been modified to the degree that it was no longer deemed to be advisable to keep the colonies in a permanently weak state. “On the contrary,” wrote Jules Harmand in 1910, “if we propose to make our possessions produce (*for the interest of the metropolis, it is true*) as much as possible, we conceive this result only by the development of their own future, by their material prosperity, and by the satisfaction of the needs and aspirations of their own peoples.”<sup>45</sup> The basic idea remained the same: it was only the method that had changed, and only incidentally that the colonies gained.

This recognition of the need for colonial growth was the more necessary, because the problem was changing in the early years of this century. The rallying-cry of “markets” of Ferry’s time was giving way to the somewhat uneasy demand for “raw materials,” especially for tropical products. The problem now was not so much to sell goods as to make them,—not to secure the import-trade of the colonies but their exports. This was where the real difficulty lay, and that was why the attacks on “tariff assimilation” were so important,—not because of assimilation in itself, but because that policy tended to retard the development of the colonies and to keep them in a state of permanent debility. The capture of colonial markets began to have quite a new interpretation. Of four milliard francs of colonial produce imported to France in 1913, nine-tenths came from foreign colonies, especially such products as ground-nuts, copra, rubber, cotton and silk, all of which the French colonies could grow. Japan secured all the cotton of Cambodia, yet France had to buy 33,000 tons of Indian cotton every year! The silks of Tonkin went abroad, Congo timbers went to Hamburg, the rubber of West Africa was directed towards Antwerp and Liverpool, and Hamburg monopolized the skins and leathers of Madagascar. The colonial system was thus out of joint, and really functioned, so far as meeting French needs went, only as regards food-stuffs from North Africa. The breakdown in supplying cotton and rubber were positive national fatalities, for, as France

<sup>44</sup> P. Doumer, *L’Indo-Chine Française* (1905), p. 360.

<sup>45</sup> J. Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, p. 11.

depended on foreigners for 80 per cent. of her needs in these two raw materials, the position was deplorable.

By 1914, therefore, the problem was receiving a new orientation, and the events of the war hastened and made inevitable the perception of the weaknesses of the situation. France's economic policy in the colonies had secured neither a commensurate colonial development nor economic security for the nation. It had in effect been a class policy for the manufacturers of the north and east. The newer policy, on the other hand, was based on national considerations, and the fight over assimilation, which had been so pronounced from 1906 to 1913, also changed its form because of the war.

After that, especially because of Sarraut's *mise en valeur* policy in 1921, there was a reaction to an outright protectionism and an increased (but again newly interpreted) subordination of the colonies to the needs of France.<sup>46</sup> But there was also the clear understanding that the determining factor was no longer the needs of French industrialists but of the nation as a whole, and also that the objects of both France and the colonies could *only* be achieved by the development of the colonies to the uttermost. The old bogie of "competition" had gone,<sup>47</sup> and the movement for "tariff personality" much abated, because now the idea was for the specialized development of each colony as part of a great organism,—the French Colonial Empire. Each cell was considered not for its personality, or for its all-round development, but was regarded solely as a part of the whole. However, this was clearly not a reaction to the *Pacte Colonial* or to the stage of 1892, but to the newer idea of mutual development,—or rather, the idea of mutual interdependence in development. Each colony had to develop along lines determined for it by what it could give the Empire as a whole. The organic analogy now held more than ever, because it was henceforth on the dual basis, not only of subordination to the central nerve-system, but also of the need for the healthy development of each limb. Hitherto, it had been realized that the colonies *might* prosper as well as France, now it was seen that they had to prosper, otherwise France was weakened: an organism cannot flourish with a paralysed limb.

To further this conception, the mother-country naturally accepted the idea of colonial development, while the colonies responded by accepting protection and a prescribed development along certain lines alone. The needs of the war, the post-war crisis, and then the collapse of French

<sup>46</sup> Maurice Long's striking speech to Colonial Congress of Lyon, 14-16/3/18.

<sup>47</sup> *Journal Officiel*, 3/4/21. The introduction of the "co-efficient" idea to the colonies really meant increased protection, and has been in force ever since. It varies the duty with exchange fluctuations.

finance completely changed the economic problem of the French colonies, and diverted attention from the injustice and absurdity of "tariff assimilation," which, in an even more stringent form than ever, is still in the ascendant. The cry for autonomy, which had been so noticeable in the Congress-era after 1906, was thrust into the background,<sup>48</sup> and, as in the early stages of the assimilation policy, criticism has been forestalled by surrounding the policy with an aura of patriotism, so that criticism becomes almost treason, and certainly a passive disloyalty.

The problem has changed, but centralization and subordination, always the two bases of the economic aspect of French colonization, remain as before: their interpretation may have been widened by the changing circumstances and they may not be as distinctly anti-colonial as before, but they still show that the dominant French idea is a centripetal and not centrifugal policy. Autonomy and disintegration remain outside the scope of French colonial policy, and even the peculiar conditions of each colony are utilized so as to further the well-being of the organism as a whole. And so the economic ties linking the colonies to the metropolis become stronger and narrower. France does not want a weakly knit *congeries* of self-sufficient entities, with the emphasis on an increasing devolution, but a great economic machine,—a world within a world, and with no lesser entity than the Empire as a whole. The determining ideas and principles are still those of the *Pacte*: it is only the conditions that have changed, and the colonial elements have become stronger: the *motif* is the same as ever. The subordination of the colonies has always been the principle that has unified the economic side of French colonial policy,—and, in its enwidened form, more so to-day even than in 1892.

<sup>48</sup> The plea for "tariff-personality" has been revived by the Institut Colonial de Marseille and in its numerous documentary publications. See *Congrès du Régime Douanier Colonial*, 1925, p. 270 *et seq.*

## CHAPTER III

### GENERAL POLITICAL POLICY

ON its political side, French colonial theory commenced with a definite idea of the relationships that should exist between colonies and mother-country. Four such theories were considered, but two ruled out from the first, as being either out of accord with the French temperament or uncalled-for by the circumstances. The other two, assimilation and association, were accepted during the Third Republic, the period about 1900 being the dividing line between them. But, when considering such theories, it is essential to remember that they were always kept in place, so to speak, by certain wider French view-points. Whatever the accepted theory of colonial relationships for the moment, it was the idea of colonial subordination that was always in the ascendant. The colonial problem was in essence not a problem in itself, but simply one element in the wider problem of the French nation. National interests had to have the first consideration: hence, any purely colonial theory was limited by this necessity of subordination and by the maintenance of all effective power in the hands of the central officials,—the Parisian *bureaux*. Add to these general considerations the French instinct for centralization and uniformity: and it will be readily evident why the general political side of colonial theory was never given much expression, and why the actual enfranchisement of the colonies has always been so limited. Development is not determined by the degree of colonial progress (witness the obsolete Councils of Indo-China<sup>1</sup>), but is almost entirely a reflex of the general French position. The colonies are thus denied an opportunity: their case is judged before it ever arises. The problem is never interpreted as a colonial one, never considered on its own merits: hence the gap that almost always exists between colonial theory and colonial practice in France.

#### I. French Theories of Colonial Relationships

French theory<sup>2</sup> recognizes four types of colonial relationships, each

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. XI, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. in *Recueil des Délibérations du Congrès Colonial National, 1889-1890*, Vol. I, p. 16, Vol. II, p. 14 *et seq.* (Isaac Report); or Girault, 4th edition (1921), Part I, p. 66 *et seq.*

vested with somewhat artificial attributes,—subjection (*assujétissement*), autonomy, assimilation, and association. The first of these is simply government by and for the metropolis, and is supposed to consider the interests of the mother-country alone. Government is rigidly kept under central control, representation of colonial interests is unknown, the very concept of separate colonial interests is denied, and economic life is developed only in those directions that will yield a profit for the metropolis. In brief, the *Pacte Colonial* is in its full heyday, and the colony is viewed as a plantation to be exploited, not as a developing society. The French take the Dutch colonies as representing this type, but, unless the example is limited to the East Indies of the days of the “culture” system, that is, before about 1875, it loses any historical point. A colony of “subjection” is, at present, rather a case of what has happened in the past and what might possibly, but not probably, occur again in the future. It is an extreme rather than a type. What significance this type of colony possesses at the present juncture thus arises, not from its practical importance, but because the mode of thought which produced such exploitation in the past tends in part to linger and to shape colonial evolution. It represents a tendency, a way of looking at things, an almost subconscious force that colours colonial action, but not a practicable code in itself. The tariff *régime* of the French colonies, for instance, is determined by this notion of colonial subordination, as also is the ban on political enfranchisement by the denial of separate colonial interests. Up till recently, too, the *refoulement* of the Algerians and Pacific Islanders was a direct outcome of this point of view. Indeed, it might with accuracy be asserted that, since 1870, the “subjection” point of view has been more typical of French colonial effort than of Dutch.

The second form of development is assumed by the French to be particularly English,—to be almost a reflex of the exaggerated individualism of English institutions. As exemplified by the British Dominions, this form of autonomy allows the maximum self-government, both in political and economic matters.<sup>3</sup> The colony is viewed as a distinct society, bound by sentiment to the motherland, it is true, but developing in the light of its own personality and *milieu*. As soon as a sufficient stage of development is reached, responsible government is conceded by the mother-country, and is interpreted as embracing a gradually widening range of functions. The colony is viewed as a separate microcosm living its own life, and influenced by the parent organism only in so far as its growth is determined by the general laws to which the family of organisms

<sup>3</sup> Girault, “Rapports politiques entre métropole et colonies,” in *Institut Colonial International*, 1903 session, p. 371.

in question is subject. Beyond this similarity, or predisposition to similarity, of development, there is little direct connection between parent and offspring, in the shape of consciously directed growth. Indeed, a diverse development, due either to modifications of the national temperament under the new conditions or to the general environment, may even be deemed desirable: whereas, under the French system, such a variation is viewed as failure, and almost as something inconceivable. As opposed to this, autonomy to the English means development and even difference to the degree to which it becomes anti-social or positively secessionist. Within these limits, its extent is determined almost entirely by the rate of the colony's progress. If the colony can institute representative and later responsible government, the concession is given voluntarily and is not ruled out of court by *a priori* considerations or by the interests of a manufacturing class in the metropolis, both of which forces have prevented similar developments with the French colonies. Moreover, responsible government, the principle of which was accepted by England in 1840, is viewed as something elastic. At first, it was simply interpreted as a right of controlling the executive and voting taxes, but certain fundamental matters (land, for instance) were retained by the central British Government. Gradually, however, the departments thus retained were transferred to colonial control. In this manner, emigration, tariffs, and even the right of making commercial treaties with foreign Powers were conceded, to the degree to which they did not conflict with Imperial safety. All of these issues had been decided when France really commenced to organize her new Empire, so that the British experience was there clearly for her to see. Certain Australian States were already discriminating against British goods and were demanding that policy should be determined by their interests alone even where, as with the case of Chinese immigration into New South Wales, the policy so desired was in direct conflict with Great Britain's general diplomacy.<sup>4</sup>

As it developed in the British Dominions, autonomy thus meant parallel rather than controlled development, and in particular, development without rigid limits. Both of these features were opposed to the French conception of colonization, which might practically be described as the imposition of shackles on colonial development and the compression of even the limited development allowed into a frame shaped by the permanent officials of the Rue Oudinot. Development is both circumscribed and predetermined: there is nothing unlimited or even natural about it. These two features reappear again and again in French colonial practice, even in the last few years when, theoretically speaking, associa-

<sup>4</sup> A. B. Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, Vol. II, p. 1003 *et seq.*

tion or collaboration has been the accepted form of development. Elasticity, adaptability to varying circumstances, local variations,—indeed, everything that autonomy stands for, are all restricted under the French system. The English retain certain basic principles and allow the actual rules for each colony to vary with circumstances, so long as the spirit of the principle remains intact ; whereas the French, when confronted by a similar multiple problem of colonization, endeavour to make the rule, and even the text, exactly the same in each province, even if, by so doing, they infringe, or perhaps completely eradicate, the basic principle. The form is triumphant, the letter counts more than the spirit. Hence arises that artificiality which characterizes French policy,—that spurious uniformity which is the negation of administrative adaptability. What they view as the triumph of colonization, namely the reduction of colonial affairs to a uniform code, is really the condemnation of their efforts. The interests of their charges, and even their own interest, are subordinated to this shibboleth.

That explains why they have always refused to evolve in the direction of autonomy, even in the case of colonies like Algeria, which have a large European population ; and why they adhered for so long to the quite different system of assimilation. Assimilation, which means the preservation of the dried bones of the Encyclopædists long after they should have dissolved into dust, is officially defined as “ that system which tends to efface all difference between the colonies and the motherland, and which views the colonies simply as a prolongation of the mother-country beyond the seas.”<sup>5</sup> This implies that the peculiar organization of the colonies is reduced to a minimum. As far as possible, everything follows French models, and, save where geographical conditions positively necessitate change, the colony is regulated in precisely the same way as a *département* in mainland France. It is represented in Paris just as a department is : it is administered through the usual organs and by the same forms : it has the same laws, the same official hierarchy, the same local councils, the same tribunals, and the same *minutiae* of government. Nothing is different. The aim is to extend the old organization and to adapt the new circumstances to it rather than to create a new one or to adapt the old one to the changed conditions. Conditions might be different, but the *Code Napoléon* goes on for ever ! And, if it does not fit, the fault is with the natives, not the code ! Let them conform or hear the other agent of French colonization, the rattle of the mitrailleuse ! The official, a true product of the rigid educational system of France and thinking no thought save in terms of the official hierarchy, sees only these alternatives ; and that was the spirit in which France sought to

<sup>5</sup> Isaac Report to Congress of 1889, *op. cit.*, p. 14 ; Girault, Part I, pp. 71-73.

govern her Empire before 1900, and in which, theory notwithstanding, she attempts, to a large extent, to do to-day.<sup>6</sup>

In theory, assimilation means that there are no separate services for the colonies. The army is the same, the colonial administrative corps is but an extension of the metropolitan, and the Parisian Ministries extend their action to the colonies as to the Midi or Picardy. Colonial departments are "attached" to the metropolis and, instead of being grouped under one Minister of the Colonies, are divided amongst the various Ministers according to their nature. Thus, colonial budget-matters go to the Minister of Finance, legal questions to the Minister of Justice, details of civil administration to the Minister of the Interior, and so on. The system of *rattachements* which Algeria had from 1878 to 1895 is carried to its logical limit,<sup>7</sup> and the conquest of a new colony simply means the addition of a new department to the administrative system. The Minister of the Colonies, if he exists at all under this system, is more a connecting link than a direct administrator: he is a liaison-officer or a magnified clerk, useful to index the letters concerning colonial matters but a *fainéant* as regards the decision of policy. In brief, the need for a separate colonial organization is not admitted, or, where it creeps in, as it must do in practice, is ignored as an exception to the general rule.

The same point of view applies to the natives. The aim with them is to inculcate the civilization of France and to convert them into pinch-beck Frenchmen, revelling in the cultural and legal traditions of the metropolis. The spirit of Revolution and the glories of the *Code Civil*, cravats and family restriction, and all the other characteristics of France are to transform them: whether these suit them as well as their nakedness, their own customs and savage content is another question, but one not considered by the assimilators. Is not the spirit of French civilization beyond cavil, and is not the opening of all this heritage to the Virginies and Rarahas of the jungles one of the noblest gestures conceivable? What could be finer and more liberal, asks the French theorist?<sup>8</sup> The natives, therefore, are to conform outwardly to French customs and, in theory, to learn to think as Frenchmen. The whole structure of native life is to be consciously re-moulded with this aim in view,—first destroyed as far as is necessary, and then built up again. Indeed, the whole theory rests on the supposition that any native population can abandon its existing civilization and modes of thought, as a snake sheds its skin,

<sup>6</sup> Messimy's criticisms in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 5/4/11, 28/5/11: budget-speech for colonies, 1909 and 1910, or *Notre Œuvre Coloniale* (1910), p. 393 *et seq.*

<sup>7</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 11/11/96; or J. Cambon, *Le Gouvernement Général de l'Algérie* (1918), p. 13 *et seq.*

<sup>8</sup> This is exactly the point of view of the Congress of 1889. See *Recueil des Délibérations du Congrès Colonial National, 1889–1890*, Vol. I, p. 16 *et seq.*

and gradually absorb the new-coming customs and ideas. Destruction is to lead to construction, and the goal is naturalization. Assimilation, as it affects the natives, thus means a myopic idealism that would convert cannibals into tropical Frenchmen. It is assimilation of Stone-Age natives to nineteenth-century Frenchmen.

Doubtless, assimilation sounds well in theory. It secures the maximum advantages for the mother-country: it gives every right to the settler overseas: it denies nothing (except the right of natural development) to the colony: and it cannot be accused of illiberalism as applied to the natives. It seems to fulfil both the material and the moral demands of colonization, and to be the very expression of colonial liberalism. And how logical it is! And how pregnant with a naïve assumption of the ineffable superiority, the perfection almost, of the colonizing Power!

Yet in practice it operates quite differently.<sup>9</sup> It is only a theory and never becomes more than one. Formulated in philosophical abstractions, it fails to consider the facts of the situation. The one set of laws applies to colonies and natives as widely apart as possible. To it, geography and ethnology are factors that scarcely influence the situation. Artificial laws, suitable to no single colony, are made to apply to all alike. To an assimilator, variation is equivalent to apostasy, and all colonial development is sacrificed at the altar of a non-existent uniformity and an equally non-existent remedy. The theory is based on an abstraction, and in practice, comes to mean either a forced change or stultification, neither of which is developmental in any real sense of the word. The colonial administration, being subordinated to Paris, as Algeria was under the *rattachement* system, lacks virility and adaptability, and tends to become a lifeless officialdom. The colony itself, denied the right of natural growth and the life-saving struggle with its own difficulties, remains an artificial monstrosity, like a man fully developed physically yet with the brain of a baby. The natives, deluded for the moment by the intoxication of ultimate equality, recklessly destroy all that was vital in their own existence and find too late that the masses cannot attain the new standard and that the minority, having reached it, have forsaken their own life and yet are not admitted to the spirit of the new. The result is either a futile iconoclasm or a bitter disillusion. Assimilation thus proves illusory. Its theory seems to offer all that can be desired: its practice makes a colony stillborn, paralyses its services, and offers nothing to the native. Though outwardly the most liberal of colonial doctrines, it is in reality the worst possible, because even the theory of exploitation allows efficiency, and assimilation does not even do that.

<sup>9</sup> See the detailed analysis in Chapter IV, *infra*.

The plight of the Algerian natives up to 1900, the paralysis of administration in Algeria and Cochin-China, and the policy of tariff-assimilation after 1892 are typical instances of the practical working of the theory, and show how a colonizing Power may be cursed by a too-rigid adherence to a single theory.<sup>10</sup>

Assimilation is undoubtedly the least practical, the least progressive, and even the least humanitarian of all the theories of colonial relationship. Compared with it, even "domination" assumes desirable characteristics, because domination allows the colony to expand economically and means good treatment to the natives to the degree to which it pays. But, fortunately for the colonies and the natives, there was always a gap between theory and practice, and, even in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the heyday of the assimilators, their theory simply *could* not be enforced in practice, however unanimous might be the feeling towards it in France. The result was that, even when legislation was determined by the ideas of the assimilators, the practical application of that legislation lagged behind; and in many cases, the very idealism of the statute book, by being out of touch with the actual situation, allowed a certain subterranean development despite the theory of the day. But the impractical nature of the theory could just as easily lead to stagnation: and in neither case was there any real assimilation. Assimilation reduced itself to a mischievous arm-chair theory, and became either a cloak for stagnation or a hindrance to normal development in practice. Its good points existed only in theory, unless the opening of a largely unrealizable vista of Europeanization to the natives could be termed a good point.

As a result of this *contretemps*, the position of colonial theory had become somewhat clearer by about 1900. The French theorist usually rejected the three theories existing at that time. Domination was viewed as an anachronism and a negation of the spirit of colonization, which was now looked on as involving duties as well as returns. Autonomy was never seriously considered in France, because it was viewed as essentially an English idiosyncrasy and quite out of accord with the Gallican temperament. And assimilation, which had for long been particularly associated with French colonization, was also set aside as undesirable in theory and either inapplicable or disastrous in practice.

Destructive criticism had thus disposed of the existing theories, but it was still by no means clear in which direction the new system would develop. In an age stirred by the Congo and Indo-Chinese scandals,

<sup>10</sup> This is best proved by the position of the Antilles. Report of Congress of 1889, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 171, or important report in *Compte Rendu du Congrès des Anciennes Colonies*, 1909, p. 203.

colonization was becoming increasingly moral,—that was the first point. We conquer only the hearts of our subjects, cried Galliéni and Messimy: we colonize, partly at least, for the well-being of the natives, asserted French deputies.<sup>11</sup> A theory based on conquest pure and simple could therefore not be considered in France after the humanitarian reaction of 1905. But autonomy remained as unwanted as ever, and the Frenchman, however much he might criticize the theory of assimilation, was as essentially a product of the administrative machine as ever, bereft of individuality and originality. In view of this, the new theory—any colonial theory in France—had to have at least a substratum of assimilation. At the same time, the only possible development was in the direction of autonomy,—not necessarily autonomy in the British sense of responsible government, but perchance autonomy on native lines. Autonomy came to be synonymous with any development that was natural and spontaneous: it was an asymptotic curve, with actual autonomy in the limited parliamentary sense only a vision on the horizon. The new theory in all, therefore, had to be a blend of assimilation and autonomy, partaking of the nature of the first to some degree, yet tending towards some form of suitable self-government,—to a potential autonomy. It was between the two and yet distinct from either,—compatible with the French instinct of administration but at the same time capable of being adapted to a developing colony.

The new theory was called association or collaboration. As originated by Jules Harmand and Waldeck-Rousseau and Clementel, it emphasized the essential duality of the colonial task.<sup>12</sup> Both French and natives had to progress, if the achievement was not to be sterile. “The colonies are made only for the Metropolis,”<sup>13</sup> the slogan of the *Pacte Colonial* had run: but the new theory emphatically denied this. Colonization was no longer viewed as a unilateral operation. It is true that the motive of economic empiricism remained, and had to remain,—to this extent the old theory lingered. But that was no longer the only motive.

“Gradually a doctrine of colonization emerged which, while starting from a consideration of metropolitan power or profit, was yet instinctively impregnated with a spirit of altruism, and worked for the colonies themselves,—for their own advantage, for their economic strength, and their human development. It reconciled more and more those two elements without which no policy can be popular in a democracy like ours,—the heart and reason, duty and self-interest.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Waldeck-Rousseau, in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 15/6/01.

<sup>12</sup> J. Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>13</sup> This phrase actually occurred in *L'Encyclopédie*, article “Colonie,” by de Forbonais.

<sup>14</sup> A. Sarraut, *La Mise en Valeur des Colonies Françaises* (1923), p. 87.

Thus Sarraut ; and, beyond the mere sentimental persiflage, there was a distinctly new stress,—an emphasis that did not exist in the writings of the nineties, even in those of the colonial well-wishers. Ferry and Burdeau, for instance, did not touch this point. It was essentially a part of the France reawakened by the colonial scandals of the Congo and Cochin-China, and seized once more by its rôle as the apostle of liberalism in the world. It may have been theatrical, it was probably an inverted form of national egoism, but, none the less, it was very real as a force influencing colonial policy.

The colonies had become humanized, so to speak. They were looked on as living entities in themselves, compelled to consider the interests of the motherland, of course, but still developing apart from, and even differently to, that motherland. They had become societies instead of markets, and as societies had to develop. To use the phrase which Sir Frederick Lugard coined to describe a somewhat similar change in English colonization, the French had perceived that colonization involved a dual mandate. Or, as Sarraut, the arch-apostle of the new doctrine, explained it, the *mise en valeur* was a double one. “A *mise en valeur* of natural riches and a *mise en valeur* of the human riches ! French colonial policy sees in our *protégés*, whatever the colour of their skin and however retarded their evolution, *men* and not an anonymous and servile mass,—*souls* and neither slave-prisoners nor ‘fiscal sponges.’”<sup>15</sup> Any development, therefore, had to secure the well-being of both sides.

That was the assumption at the back of the new theory. But where the association theory became so useful was in its definition of the means by which this dual end could be achieved. Assimilation also had wanted the well-being of the natives, but it had turned to an impractical means of realizing it. The associationists did not make this blunder. They saw from the outset that any development, to benefit the natives and the colony, had to do so from the native and colonial view-point. It was in the recognition of a distinct view-point in these regards that the new theory was so conspicuous an advance. It meant two points of view,—colonial and metropolitan ; and this was entirely new in French colonization. For the natives, it meant a development from their own past and compatible with that past : and, for the colony in general, it meant a strengthening as an entity in itself. Both natives and the colony were to evolve in the light of their own actual position,—from their own individual past to their own individual future.

This implied that the standards of assimilation had lost their validity. Assimilation had denied the necessity of colonial individuality, and could not conceive of any justification for development away from a norm,—

<sup>15</sup> A. Sarraut (1923), *op. cit.*, p. 88.

the norm of Paris. Deviation from this standard had been a recognition of failure: under the new theory, it might become something even desirable, a testimony to colonial virility. This applied particularly to the native sphere, and, in lesser degrees, to the legal and administrative worlds. Local influences were admitted in each of these cases and, despite the natural French tendencies to the contrary, could even dominate the situation. Contrast, for instance, the Civil Codes of Algeria and Cochin-China, exclusively French, with those of West Africa or Tonkin. The land-laws and the native courts were in the one case French, but in the other in accordance with native conditions. They were poles apart.

To be logical, this recognition of local growth should have extended to the economic sphere, but there considerations of State entered. France was content to allow the colonies to strengthen themselves economically, but the needs of the French State made it necessary to subordinate colonial development to that of France. Industrial development and tariff-laws, therefore, had to remain essentially central matters and had to be determined by the needs of the metropolis. This, though avowedly a breach in the doctrine of association, was due to a recognition of the fact that France had national, as well as colonial, problems.

On the governmental side, however, the position was easier, and there were no impassable obstacles between theory and practice. The natives were to become increasingly self-governing, but from their own point of view. Naturalization was still to be the exception rather than the rule, just as, in the judicial sphere, French civil laws were the exception. On the other hand, the natives were to develop their own laws and customs and assemblies. Self-government was to be in essentially native assemblies, like the Councils of Native Notables erected in West Africa in 1923<sup>16</sup> or like Paul Bert's elected Council in Tunisia forty years ago.<sup>17</sup> In the higher assemblies, where European interests entered as well, the native model could not be so easily followed, but still, they were to be sufficiently represented there, even if they did not control such assemblies. Association meant joint action: that could best be secured by having assemblies on the Algerian model, with separate panels or groups for Europeans and natives. These sections could meet independently and then deliberate frankly and without one section embarrassing the other. The natives could thus participate in government to the limit of their capacities. They could govern themselves in the villages and perhaps in the provinces, and take a share in the general government of the colony,—a share that would vary with their importance and stage of

<sup>16</sup> *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1923, p. 439, or Dareste, *Recueil Colonial*, 1920, p. 467, for commencement.

<sup>17</sup> J. Chailley-Bert, *Paul Bert au Tonkin* (1887), p. 129 et seq.

development. Sometimes, it would be a merely nominal representation, as in Cochinchina; at others, a real but lesser participation, as in Algeria; and still again, perhaps they could be real co-partners, as under the Tunisian Council scheme of 1922.<sup>18</sup> All depended on circumstances.

The final point of the theory of association emphasized a general decentralization. Hitherto, the most marked characteristic of French colonial efforts had been the excessive subordination to Parisian officialdom, even to the extent of throttling colonial virility. But hereafter, since mutual development was the order of the day, it was agreed (at least in theory) that the colonies had to have a freer hand. Their governors were to have "a mandate to do and dare": purely colonial matters were to come under their local assemblies: and they were to manage all things that would not prejudice other colonies or the general national interest.<sup>19</sup> The new theory spoke of the possible limits of development and allowed development with those limits, rather than ceded a few specific privileges and denied the remainder. On the administrative side, the theory of association thus meant a colonial charter allowing the progressive enfranchisement of the colonies. It was still recognized that development had to be slow and consolidated at every step, and it was felt that the change was only possible because Parliamentary control had been increasing over colonial matters since 1906, and therefore effective checks still remained with the central power. But it was certainly realized that development was permissible. The concession was not a matter of right and was not to come to colonies too quickly: yet it *could* come, and therein lay the change of emphasis. A scope was provided for the first time: whether it was realized depended on the position of the colony and on the vagaries of French politics. Yet it was something to have even the scope for development,—even the understanding that demands for change would not at once be rejected. The possibility of development was there, and however difficult its realization might be, however much the lingering of assimilative ideas or the hold of the central bureaucracy might retard it, increased local powers were not now completely out of the question.

Thus, in all, the theory of association came to mean three things. The colonies were to be strengthened and their well-being considered up to the point at which considerations of national policy entered: secondly, the natives were to develop along their own lines and, even if the French officials remained as powerful as before, they were to maintain the peculiar native codes and embody them in the new legislation: and thirdly, decentralization and a growing degree of self-government

<sup>18</sup> *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1922, p. 247 et seq.

<sup>19</sup> Sarraut (1923), *op. cit.*, pp. 105-108.

were possible, but not inevitable, contingencies. They might come, but probably would not for a long time, outside the world of theory. This position represents the post-war colonial theory of France, but it must always be remembered that there are at least two qualifying factors. Whatever theory says, the centralized rule of the Parisian officials remains the dominant feature in colonial life, even if Parliament, as at the time of Sarraut's projects of 1921-1922, adopts more liberal views.<sup>20</sup> Naturally, the *bureaux* still tend to favour the old methods of assimilation, and such is the nature of French training that the average administrators in the field do likewise. The second consideration is that any such theory of colonial enfranchisement is always qualified by the national problem of France. The central organization declares a state of national emergency, especially in recent years in the economic world; and every phase of national life, colonial or otherwise, has to be consciously subordinated to the realization of the desired ends. The colonial problem thus becomes a part of the wider national policy, and, however much the theory of association or any other theory of colonial relationships may be accepted or desired, it has to be postponed if the wider national interests demand its repression.<sup>21</sup>

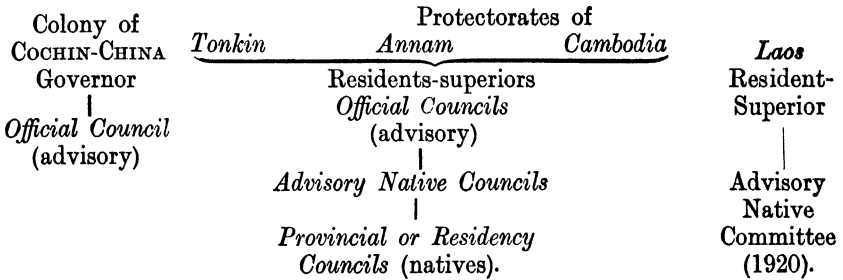
With these fundamental limitations, the theory of association is the accepted theory of colonial policy in France. But the limitations, rather than the popularity of the theory, determine how far it will be enforced in practice, and whether it will mean a real colonial co-operation and enfranchisement, or whether it will lead, as it has done in practice, only to a continuation of the old policy with a more extensive consideration of native ends and a deference to the native point of view.

<sup>20</sup> Hanotaux in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 27/11/90; J. L. de Lanessan, *La Colonisation Française en Indo-Chine* (1895), p. 346; Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, pp. 236-240; *L'Afrique Française*, 1919, p. 179.

<sup>21</sup> Dubois et Terrier (1902), *op. cit.*, p. 396; Sarraut (1923), p. 110.



II. LOCAL ORGANIZATION.



- V. WEST AFRICA.—Federation of 7 Colonies and 1 Territory.  
 EQUATORIAL AFRICA.—Federation of 4 Colonies.

In each,—a Federal Government-General and an official Government Council, purely advisory.  
 —a Lieutenant-Governor and an advisory official council in each colony of the union.

West Africa has had advisory local councils of Native Notables since 1919. Beyond that, West Africa is divided into 98, and Equatorial Africa into 44 *cercles*, each with a French administrator.

- VI. MADAGASCAR (a Government-General, but no division into colonies).  
 Governor-General

|  
*Advisory Administrative Council*  
 (Officials, and 4 nominated Europeans and 2 natives)  
 |  
*Délégations Economiques et Financières* (1924)  
 (2 sections, partly elected, partly nominated)  
 —purely advisory.

VII. THE SCATTERED COLONIES.

Each with a Governor and Council.  
*Councils-General* in Antilles, Réunion, Guiana, French India, New Caledonia, Tahiti,

—elected by French citizens.

*Colonial-Councils* in Senegal and Cochin-China, elected by French citizens, and with native elements added.

Functions of all are in voting the non-obligatory sections of the budget and advising on general economic matters.

## II. The Actual Political Organization of the French Colonies

### COLONIAL REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT

In the first stages of French colonization, it was considered sufficient to have an official council in the colony itself and a small representation of the colony in the Paris Parliament. The election of senators and deputies by the French citizens in the colonies has always been one of the distinctive attributes of French effort overseas. More, it is one of the curiosities of European colonization,—something unique in colonial annals.<sup>22</sup> It certainly has been, and remains, one of the most vexed questions in French colonial history : and, for all of these reasons, is of more than passing interest.

The history of such colonial representation has been most peculiar. It has been given and arranged under very differing sets of circumstances. It started as far back as the Revolutionary administrations. A law of August, 1792, allowed the colonies, feeble as they then were, to send thirty-four representatives to the Convention, and they were represented in the various national bodies until the Constitution of the Year VIII. That Constitution, however, abolished the colonial deputies and replaced them by an advisory council of six members, nominated by the Chambers of Agriculture in the colonies. Colonial interests were given expression on this feeble basis until the Revolution of 1848, when, in the first flush of that overweening liberalism which at once freed the slaves and instituted the wholesale naturalization of various African and Indian bodies, colonial representatives were again admitted to the national assemblies.<sup>23</sup> The Second Empire once more abolished them and reverted to the idea of a council ; and it was not until a decree of September, 1870, that representation was permanently re-established.<sup>24</sup> Since then, the principle has been reaffirmed on several occasions, even as late as 1924, and it can with accuracy be termed a cardinal feature of French colonial policy.

Actually, the position is not uniform. Some colonies have no representation at all : others, like Guiana and Senegal and Cochinchina, are represented only in the Deputies : and certain favoured groups, like Algeria, the *Anciennes Colonies*, and the five Indian towns have representatives in both the Senate and Deputies. Nor is there any uniform method of election. Election to the Senate is usually in the hands of an electoral college, composed of the different kinds of local councillors, and that to the Deputies by the suffrage of all French citizens ; but practice varies in the different groups.

<sup>22</sup> Portugal has copied France in this regard, Italy has a similar agitation.

<sup>23</sup> For history, see P. Dislère, *Traité de Législation Coloniale* (1906, 3rd edition), Vol. I, p. 361 *et seq.*

<sup>24</sup> E. Petit, *Organisation des Colonies Françaises* (1894), Vol. I, p. 254.

The whole position and policy have been hotly contested on several occasions, especially before 1914, when such a procedure was possible without hurting the new-found *amour-propre* of the colonies. The principle itself is opposed on many grounds. Its adherents assert that it is in accord with the spirit of democracy; that a Frenchman abroad should have the same rights as a Frenchman at home; that the concession of representation has a definite value in securing colonial loyalty; that the growing economic importance of the colonies renders their representation the more necessary; and that it is only by representation in Parliament itself that their views can be at all expressed.<sup>25</sup> But, of these supposed justifications, the first two assume that representation is the *only* way of realizing a colonial's rights, the third seems unfounded in fact, the fourth has no point, and the last is, to say the least, questionable. The arguments for Parliamentary representation of the colonies are weak in logic and not supported by the practical position. It is argued that the colonies should be represented when measures involving their interests are being discussed, but the colonies have their Ministerial representatives, and, even if this were not the case, is it fair that colonial representatives should gravely interfere with purely French matters? What is fair to a handful of colonists becomes unfair to the millions of Frenchmen at home, and a democracy should consider the interests of the majority. A deputy of Cochin-China, who was under the conditions the spokesman of a few colonial officials, once caused the fall of a Cabinet on the question of the central mayoralty of Paris! A few years ago, the colonies had thirty-three representatives,—a number that was clearly disproportionate in the voting on the great majority of French Parliamentary measures. They vote on legislation and budgets not applicable to their colonies, and it was never argued in practice, as the Americans did in the case of the Hawaiian Senator, that the colonial representatives were present in any limited capacity. They were admittedly there for their own local interests, yet could interfere in all matters, although it was never maintained that they should have the same mandate for general affairs of the nation, in the same way that a Midi deputy has. The arguments that justify their presence in Parliament view them as local spokesmen, but there is neither rule nor convention that they limit themselves to this function. Moreover, even if they limited themselves to questions involving their own interests, there is, it is claimed, no need for a special Parliamentary representation, because they have the three Ministries directly

<sup>25</sup> See arguments in A. Mérygnac, *Précis de Législation et d'économie Coloniales* (1912), p. 371, or *Recueil des Délibérations du Congrès Colonial National, 1889-1890*, Vol. I, p. 44 *et seq.* The bitterest opposition is in L. Vignon, *Un Programme de Politique Coloniale* (1919), p. 513.

concerned to look after their interests. And lastly, since the colonies are mainly under the *régime* of decrees, the voting of laws is beyond their interests, properly construed: the vast majority of colonial matters are regulated by simple decrees, which cannot be influenced by the colonial representatives in Parliament.

Representation was anomalous at first and has become increasingly so since. If the principle of 1870 was right, and if all the colonies were to receive the privileges vouchsafed to the undeveloped settlements of that date, colonial expansion would now demand, on a population basis, 600 deputies and 300 senators, and this takes no account of the claims for increased representation on the ground of colonial evolution in the meantime! If there are less, the colonists of the seventies were over-represented: if there are this number, the position is *ipso facto* absurd.

So much for the principle: the details are equally unjustifiable. Representation is haphazard, the franchise chaotic. The Senegalese and Hindus have the vote and representation, simply because they were organized at a certain date! Yet the Arabs and Annamites, though far more progressive, remain unrepresented! Representation has been determined by a series of legislative accidents, and is perpetuated by annual comedies. The electoral farces in the colonies have become a by-word in France. Even the official textbooks for the law-courses at the Sorbonne gravely accept and speak of this fact.<sup>26</sup> The farce reaches its height in Senegal and the French towns of India.<sup>27</sup> In the former, the negroes are said to march in lines to vote as directed; in India, the votes are recorded beforehand *en masse* by the Hindu leaders. In Martinique and Guadeloupe, intimidation and corruption have become almost synonyms for the electoral process, and, especially in the stormy period of 1900–1901, when the blacks were protesting against the hegemony of the mulattoes in the only means they understood, riots and incendiarism often accompanied the elections. In all of these colonies alike, barely one-fifth of the privileged persons take the trouble to vote at all!<sup>28</sup>

But it is the distribution, rather than the exercise, of the franchise that remains the great weakness in practice. In India there are 50,000 native voters as compared with some 500 Frenchmen: in Cochin-China there were 2,000 electors for a population of three millions, and more than three-quarters of these were officials. The Annamites, unless naturalized,

<sup>26</sup> For example, in R. Foignet, *Manuel Élémentaire de Législation Coloniale* (1925), p. 117, or Girault, 2nd Part, Vol. I, p. 685.—“It would be puerile to deny them.”

<sup>27</sup> See attacks of Estournelles de Constant in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 10, 12/7/98.

<sup>28</sup> See the crushing figures in Girault, 2nd Part, Vol. I (1922), p. 617 note.

have no vote, yet are constrained to see the despised Indian immigrants, holders of the lowest occupations, using the electoral urns! In the sugar-islands, the Indian precedent has been adopted, and the franchise extended to all, regardless of personal qualifications. These islands, proverbially torn by racial and class hatreds and noted above everything for their atrophied communal sense, have been deluged with voting-tickets.<sup>29</sup> In the Senegal, the position is the most confused of all. There, any native who happens to be born in five communes scattered over the land is given the franchise, while all the unfortunates who have not had their baby forms drugged with the sense of civic responsibility that presumably emanates from the soil of these lucky districts languish for ever in the vote-less caste. Not unnaturally, the migration of expectant mothers is by no means an unusual sight in the Senegal. Even the enfranchised *tirailleurs* of Algeria have had to earn their vote by military service; a little pre-natal care secures it in the Senegal. The whole procedure of election in every colony has thus been termed a caricature of the suffrage,—a slight to the republican *régime* instead of, as its upholders claim, one of its most obvious manifestations.

For all of these reasons, but especially because the colonial representatives interfered with purely metropolitan matters and because the elections were so farcical, the opposition to such representation was very intense before 1914. Parliament, it is true, was slow to tackle the matter, because the wider question of naturalization, already a sore point with the Moslem subjects of France, was involved: but it was clearly understood that no extension of colonial representation would be sanctioned under any circumstances, and that, if the question could have been considered *de novo*, measures like those of 1870 and 1875 would not have been approved. The whole position is archaic and meaningless, and one of the gravest obstacles in the way of settling many of France's colonial problems. The Mohammedan problem in particular is accentuated by the existence of colonial representation, or rather, by the exclusion of the Moslems from its privileges. Moreover, it is difficult to see how the questions of naturalization, the *état civil* of the Moslems, and colonial councils can be settled with this obstacle athwart the path. The trouble is not only that the question of representation is important in itself: it directly prohibits a settlement of many wider and more important issues. From being an anomaly in itself, it becomes a positive menace to France's general colonial policy.

Yet little can be done to change the position. Such representation was universally accepted in the eighties, when assimilation was the accepted theory, and a proposition to abolish it in 1897 was rejected

<sup>29</sup> Regismanset, *Questions Coloniales*: 1900-1912, p. 104 *et seq.*

without being considered.<sup>30</sup> But hostile opinion grew in the first years of the new century, and it was becoming clearer that colonial representation could no longer be explained away as a great colonial tradition. It was neither practical nor reasonable, according to the average opinion, and should be abolished because of its implications on French Mohammedan policy, and its unfairness both to the unrepresented colonies and to the French voters at home. These logical arguments, however, were given a different value by the events of the war-years, and it became impolitic, to say the least, to limit colonial rights needlessly at this time. The colonies demanded some compensation for their sacrifices in the war and were becoming increasingly restive at their lack of political privileges and the economic penalties which they had to endure. To attack their representation, which was, after all, only a more or less spectacular oddity, would have been to provoke discontent or worse. The problem had become obscured by war-psychology, and thus remains as before, save that the effect it exercises on France's wider colonial problems is becoming more and more baneful with the passage of the years.

If it is to remain, as a symbol of empire-equality, and as a vehicle of colonial self-expression, then there are no arguments as to why it should not be improved. Clearly, the fact that it has been abused in the past is no reliable guide for the future, nor is this a criticism of the system so much as a detail of its operation. Moreover, the criticism that it unduly favours certain colonies to the neglect of others, especially of the Mohammedans, can be answered by making colonial representation more uniform. There seem no serious objections to spreading the representatives over all the colonies, thus giving representation to all in proportion to their present importance: and, if this is done, the scandals of election can be overcome by limiting the franchise to those who have shown that they can exercise it. There is no reason at all why deputies should be elected by universal suffrage in certain colonies. Why cannot a restricted franchise be introduced in all? This would mean, of course, that the negroes in the Antilles and the Senegalese communes and the Indians of the French towns would be deprived of some of their rights, but after all, they number only 400,000 out of France's 56 million native subjects, and the general gain would compensate for the individual loss. That is, *if* the system of parliamentary representation has to remain (though, as has been seen, this in itself seems uncalled for), it can at least be made uniform and logical. It will always remain an anomaly and a concession to sentiment (because, in the new colonial

<sup>30</sup> Michelin Report in *Journal Officiel*, docts. parl., 1897, p. 8 *et seq.*, or Deps., 17/1/97.

days of Governments-General, the other argument that it provides an expression for colonial interests loses its force); but it will no longer be a hindrance to France's general policy. The system, one way or the other, will occasion trouble, but the discontent caused either by its complete abolition or by its reform and extension would be far less than the insidious and growing menace it is at present to French Mohammedan policy,—and, in the last resort, this latter is the most important issue in French colonization. But, however this may be, the country is at present content to let the matter drift,—presumably on the principle that troublesome points should not be considered until they cause an actual crisis.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF COLONIAL COUNCILS

Outside of representation in the central Parliament, France did little in the way of giving privileges to her colonies in the last century. The colonist in general was given a representation in Paris, because that was a spectacular gesture and a proof that a Frenchman going overseas had not forfeited any of his political rights. But the more urgent question of giving him effective representation *within* his colony was considered very little. The colony was an official preserve, ruled by automata who carried out policies determined in Paris. That was the theory of the day, and naturally left no scope for colonial councils, except as an ornamental addition to the colonial structure.

The exceptions to this theory were when Revolutionary Governments in France attempted to extend the burning fire of their liberalism to little bonfires in the colonies. Thus, the Constituent Assembly gave the colonies elected councils, with a power of coming to decisions on purely local matters (1790–1791). But they abused their powers, and colonial assemblies disappeared until the Bourbon Restoration.<sup>31</sup> In 1825 and 1827, however, for some obscure reason, the government of Charles X set up General Councils in the old colonies,—nominated bodies to advise on economic questions. This was a very meagre start, but the Government of July went further and substituted more powerful bodies for them in April, 1833. The “Colonial Councils,” as the new bodies were called, were quite different from the General Councils they replaced. The earlier ones had been purely departmental assemblies, exactly duplicating those of France; but the new ones, as the very designation “Colonial” implied, were specially designed for the overseas possessions. They were elected by a college composed of financial representatives, and, as the Monarchy of July believed in administrative decentralization, had extended powers. They voted the budget, fixed certain taxes, and, in

<sup>31</sup> L. Deschamps, *Les Colonies pendant la Revolution* (1898), p. 174 *et seq.*

general, decided all local matters that did not come within the provenance of Parliamentary laws or Royal Ordinances. They really had rights of local self-government, although the checks of the executive officials made the system stop a long way short of the English system of responsible government.<sup>32</sup>

These Councils in turn abused their powers, because they imposed customs and passed decrees conflicting with the policy of the motherland, and, by a curious irony, were abolished *in toto* by that very Revolutionary Government of 1848 that was laying up trouble for the future in most other directions by the excessive liberalism of its colonial reforms. But the colonists, having enjoyed these powers for fifteen years, could not be deprived of every vestige of their privileges at one stroke, and it was obvious that there had to be some form of council. Experience had shown, however, that it was dangerous to give the self-seeking planters of the Old Colonies as much power as the Colonial Councils had given them since 1833, so that, when the Antilles and Réunion were again given councils in 1854, they were only allowed the limited variety such as had existed between 1825 and 1833. These were advisory "General Councils," not powerful "Colonial Councils." They had practically no powers at first, for France was determined to give the colonists their political education gradually, and not to invite disaster, as on two previous occasions, by a premature delegation of power. The Councils remained, therefore, on the old departmental model of the French mainland.

The *sénatus-consulte* of May 3, 1854, remains the fundamental legislation on this matter.<sup>33</sup> As in so many other fields, the Republicans simply maintained and extended the organization already in force. Up to 1892, such General Councils were extended to colonies that did not have them,—for instance, to Guiana (1878), Senegal (1879), and the Pacific colonies (1885). At the same time, their powers were increased. But, even so, they were only restored to the position of 1825,—that is, each extension of power did no more than approximate them more closely to the *Conseils-généraux* of France itself. They are elected by universal suffrage, but are not very powerful. The governor can prorogue or dissolve them at will: on most matters, they can only advise: and practically the only field in which they can come to decisions is in regard to property-matters, and, even there, the Council of State can annul their decisions. In practice, they virtually decide certain of the budget expenses, but all of this rests with the discretion of both the local and the

<sup>32</sup> Documents are in Dislère (1906), Vol. II, chap. 7. Cp. Vol. I, p. 371, or Girault (1922), 2.1.653 *et seq.* A documented account is in G. Francois' *Le Budget Local des Colonies* (1908), p. 20 *et seq.*

<sup>33</sup> Dislère (1906), *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 84, 218; *Recueil des Délibérations du Congrès Colonial National*, 1889-1890, Vol. II, p. 9 *et seq.*

central executive officials. They remain elected advisory bodies of no considerable importance. They merely duplicate a detail of French local government in the colonies and were quite inadequate when the colonies came to have interests of their own. After 1892, therefore, they gradually declined, and official policy turned to other more extensive methods of representation. At present, there are only six General Councils in the French Empire, and all are insignificant.

Two other colonies had practically similar bodies, although local exigencies demanded a somewhat different organization. The first of these was in Cochin-China, which had been annexed and assimilated to France. As an assimilated colony it had to have some local legislature, and yet the great bulk of the population consisted of natives. These were too important to be overlooked, yet had to stand outside the suffrage, otherwise the disastrous experiment of the Senegalese communes or the Antilles would find itself duplicated. As instituted in 1880, therefore, its Colonial Council was an elected body, with representation accorded to both the natives and to Europeans, though by different systems for each. Of a total membership of eighteen, six were elected by French citizens, six were natives chosen by a college consisting of delegates from the municipalities, four represented commercial bodies, and the last two were nominated by the Government.<sup>34</sup> The only other such Council, that of Senegal, arose from equally peculiar circumstances. The natives of five communes there had been enfranchised *en bloc* in 1848, and they alone had elected representatives to the earlier General Council which Senegal had in common with the other colonies. But this meant that their fellows outside the privileged communes, that is, the great majority of the population, had no rights at all: hence a decree of December, 1920, replaced the existing General Council by a Colonial Council on the Cochin-Chinese model.<sup>35</sup> As before, the French citizens, mostly the natives of the five communes, elected twenty members, but now, in addition, the local chiefs in *palaver* elected twenty of their own number to represent the outside native population. Both of these Colonial Councils, however, are simply Councils-General in everything but name, and are organized in this way mainly because of the peculiar demographical conditions in the colonies concerned.

As the colonies developed, however, the legislative problems changed. They became societies, almost States in themselves, and local interests began to emerge. This was especially the case in Algeria and after the institution of the federal governments in the other groups of colonies. Such a step necessarily entailed a large degree of decentralization, and

<sup>34</sup> E. Petit, *op. cit.*, Vol. I (1894), pp. 249, 280.

<sup>35</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 9/12/20.

this in turn meant the emergence of a distinctly local point of view. To express this, some wider kind of Council became necessary. The representative body had to be something more than a cog in the machinery of local administration,—and that was all that the Councils-General and the newer Colonial Councils amounted to. The need was for a miniature Parliament, however restricted its functions might be at first, and it was idle to grope round amongst the institutions of French local government to find a model that might be transplanted to the colonies, as the Colonial Council had been. Something like the quite different Colonial Councils of 1833–1848 was needed,—some embryonic legislative body for the colony as a whole.

The starting-point in this connection was naturally Algeria, because there the French population was far larger than in any other colony, and moreover, the land had always been the general experimental-station of French policy. The departments of Algeria had had local Councils-General on the ordinary administrative model since 1875. Consisting of elected French and native members, these had exactly the same attributes as in France itself and the other colonies, and offered no peculiar features. They simply aided the prefect at the head of each department, that was all. It was not until 1898 that Algeria took the next step and offered anything to colonial theory in this connection. Then, as a result of the discontent and riots of the early nineties and because of the protests against the system of *rattachements* or administrative union to France, a body known as the *Délégations Financières* had been created.<sup>36</sup> This step defined the direction of political development throughout the French colonies and explained the official attitude to the general questions of colonial growth. The *Délégations* was simply an economic Council, consisting of three sections. Of these, the first had twenty-four members to represent the French settlers, the second an equal number representing French citizens other than settlers on the land, and the third was the native section, with nine members elected by the natives of the civil territories, six elected by the Kabylie chiefs, and the remaining six nominated in the military territories of the southern interior. Each section deliberated separately and existed specifically to represent certain interests. The whole scheme is an interesting experiment in arriving at common interests through the medium of particular. It is one especially favourable to a country in which several peoples live side by side and where a joint body would mean the submergence of all save the most powerful section: and the point was that these were the conditions that pertained in most of the French colonies.

<sup>36</sup> The decree is in full in Girault (1921), Part 3, p. 108. A good article is in *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, July, 1900, Sept., 1903.

The functions of the Algerian body are equally interesting. It meets almost exclusively to discuss the local budget, on all of which it advises and over certain parts of which it has control. Each delegation nominates members to a special joint commission which examines the budget as drawn up by the Government-General. They report to the general body, where the budget is discussed and voted. But well-defined limitations are imposed on their power, and such voting of the budget is by no means what it is in a British colony enjoying the rights of responsible government. Certain expenses, the so-called obligatory charges, are entirely outside their scope, so that the ordinary work of administration would go on however recalcitrant the *Délégations* became. But, in practice, their power has gradually increased until, by 1920, four-fifths of the total budget had come under their control. Certain other matters, too, especially the customs, are taken from them, and there are various executive checks both inside and outside the colony. Nevertheless, they are to a large degree the arbiters of Algerian finances,<sup>37</sup> and, outside of their budgetary functions, they can, if called upon, give advice upon "all other financial and economic questions." As a result, the charter of 1898, especially as enlarged by the cession of budgetary autonomy in 1900,<sup>38</sup> came to mean two things,—that the representative body practically controlled the colony's budget (though liable to external checks if wider national considerations intervened), and, secondly, that they became the economic spokesmen of the country, and, as the events of the post-war crisis showed, a by no means powerless check on the Government-General.

This type of financial Council became the recognized form for the French colonies. The normal organization for a developed colony came to be an economic council, with separate panels for the various sections of the population, both native and French. All political affairs were to be kept in the hands of the officials and in no wise to be even discussed by the elected body. Its chief, indeed its only positive, function was to discuss and pass the budget: and even this was but one step in the evolution of the budget and by no means entailed that it was final in the form so approved. Beyond that, the local Council was only to advise and, in particular, protest, thus enabling the executive officials to frame a policy in accordance with the wishes of the people. After 1900, the colonies in general could thus have Councils which could influence, even if they could not say the final word on, the local budgets, and which could

<sup>37</sup> For details of position, see Chap. XVI, III, *infra*, or Girault, Part I, pp. 176-178. At present, the local bodies have a virtual but not legal control over 80 per cent. of the budget.

<sup>38</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 15/12/99, 23/5/1900, or report in *Journal Officiel*, docts. parl., sess. ord., 1900, p. 1708. For details, see Chap. VI below.

impede, while they could not absolutely hold up, the work of administration.

The Algerian scheme, though not extended to any other colony, remains the model of development, to be granted piecemeal as any other colony reaches a sufficient stage of development. Most colonies, like West Africa, retain only an official Council, and some, like Indo-China, have an official Council with native members in addition; but none have the elaborate Algerian organization. The protectorate of Tunisia, however, goes one stage further, even than Algeria, in expressing French policy in this regard. As a result of the protracted agitations after 1912, reforms of 1922 instituted a series of Councils which represent the furthest stage to which French colonial policy is willing to go at present.<sup>39</sup> The Tunisian system adheres to the customary form of economic councils representing interests instead of individuals: but it differs from the Algerian in extending to other than the national field and in giving absolute predominance to native representatives in certain of the smaller sections. The local Councils, those in each Caidat, are, it is true, solely advisory, but they have ten native members to eleven French, so that the native interests are too important to be overlooked. In the national body, the Grand Council of Tunisia, their position is quite as important. This Council is a sectional one like the *Délégations Financières* of Algeria, with one section for the natives and another for Europeans. Each section can introduce changes into the Budget, and no change can be brought in over the heads of the other section, except for reasons of State. If this is a limitation, it is also a safeguard for the native section. All political and constitutional matters are specifically placed outside the Council's scope, although in the economic field, a considerable, though not complete, power of self-government is conceded. A purely advisory body of somewhat similar sections has been introduced to Madagascar in September, 1921,<sup>40</sup> and the Ministry of Colonies has declared that, as soon as the native or European populations in any colony shall have reached a sufficient degree of development, this will be the model gradually realized.

As will be evident, however, the scope of development actually attained in this direction in the French colonial world has been very little. There are two provinces, Algeria and Tunisia, in which the joint economic assemblies have definite rights in connection with the budget: in eight others, the Council advises and has a little positive influence in the same direction: but beyond this, save for an advisory

<sup>39</sup> *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1922, p. 247.

<sup>40</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, 1922, p. 44. Extended and made representative in May, 1924 (Foignet, 1925, *op. cit.*, p. 205); *Journal Officiel*, 12/5/24.

body in Madagascar and a partly representative Council in Indo-China, the colonies have no legislative bodies. Representation in the central Parliament is supposed to meet the demands of the French citizens in the colonies, and the provision for economic articulation is deemed sufficient for the natives. Beyond that the French do not go.

The position is remarkable in many ways. Algeria has 700,000 French settlers, yet has only two Councils with a right of influencing the budget but forbidden to discuss political matters. Tunisia has its elaborate, but as yet embryonic, scheme of councils, also limited to budgetary discussion. Indo-China and West Africa, despite their growing importance, have no effective Federal Councils, Madagascar has its new advisory body, the older colonies have their ornamental departmental Councils, and Equatorial Africa has nothing! Nowhere is there any political body, nowhere any responsible government.

#### REASONS FOR POLITICAL BACKWARDNESS

It is abundantly clear why this inadequate situation has persisted. In the main, it was produced by two sets of forces. Colonization in the first place emphasized the economic standpoint. That is why theory is so developed on the economic side. Ferry's theory of markets, the 1892 theory of colonial subordination, and the twentieth-century argument for raw materials from the colonies were all clearly etched and admitted of no dispute. But here entered the second set of forces. Part of each economic theory in turn consisted of the assumption that the colonies should be subordinated to France. To this was added the rule of the *bureaux* and the instinct for centralization, because centralization and subordination largely meant the same thing. This meant rule by officials and a corresponding refusal to consider colonial development,—an attitude that was strengthened by the fact that the French colonies were, with the exception of Northern Algeria, situated in the tropics and thus closed to extensive European settlement. The colonies remained native strongholds and, even up to the present, dominated by the permanent executive officials. The attitude of the metropolis and the position of the colonies thus combined to make any development economic. That is why the first colonial assemblies had economic functions alone and why they have always been forbidden to consider political matters. That is why, too, complete control of economic matters has always been kept from the local assemblies. Even in Algeria, and still more in the other colonies, the executive in the colony and in France, as well as the French Parliament, all exert restraining influences.

The only advance was in the recognition of a large degree of budgetary autonomy by the law of 1900, and in the idea of a growing participation

of native interests,—both of which policies are still confined to a minority of the French colonies. The present policy is gradually to extend the Algerian model, as amplified in parts in Tunisia, to the more backward colonies. But nothing is countenanced beyond the idea of economic functions and the effective representation of the various sections of the community. In general, except in Algeria and recently in Indo-China, there is a ban on the idea of individual representation (other than for French citizens), and thus by implication on naturalization. And, clearer than anything else, is the frequently reiterated pronouncement that there is to be no political development, even for advisory purposes. There is to be no devolutionary policy in this connection, and neither representative nor responsible government in the British sense. Still less is there to be autonomy or dominion status, even in Algeria and Indo-China. The issue specifically arose in those colonies and was at once dealt with. The French administration, while announcing the possibility of more extensive economic councils, especially for the changing Indo-China, resolutely refused to consider any political enfranchisement. Matters of policy, even of local policy, pertained to the official world or to Parliament, and even reformers like Maurice Long or Albert Sarraut, conformed to this point of view. As Sarraut said, during his tenure of the Ministry of the Colonies: “If my native policy clearly admits the necessity of advisory local assemblies, composed of natives elected on a native suffrage, I say very clearly that it does not favour a more or less hidden abdication of our sovereignty.”<sup>41</sup> A little more administrative and financial power is envisaged for the colonies, and the joint native-French Councils are to have more real power in aiding the administration: but they are only to aid, and it is the administration that is to remain supreme in all of the colonies. Without executive supremacy, the French Empire would have no organization. Any colonial assemblies are to be tolerated, therefore, only in so far as they make the work of administration more efficient, either in itself or in curbing the spirit of discontent amongst the people. But development in the sense of an independent responsible government is not within the comprehension of French politicians, and, it must be added, very little advocated by the colonies themselves.

All sections of colonial thinkers in France agree on this interpretation. All would place these inexorable limits on colonial evolution, some more stringently than others. Doumer, for instance, representing the advanced ideas of twenty years ago, held that French officials were to govern the natives for their own welfare, and that no representation was needed beyond a purely advisory council nominated by the Chambers of Com-

<sup>41</sup> Sarraut in *Journal Officiel*, Senate, 27/2/20. For Long's views, see *Colonies et Marine*, Feb. 1921, p. 106 *et seq.*

merce and Agriculture.<sup>42</sup> To Jules Harmand, who spoke for the reformers of the period immediately before 1914, all that was necessary was an advisory assembly, consisting chiefly of nominated members and representatives of specialist bodies, and forbidden even to discuss the budget!<sup>43</sup> Sarraut, for the post-war reformers, goes a little further, as has been seen, and wants councils of the Tunisian type. But he stops short of local self-government, even in economic matters, and emphasizes administrative decentralization as his fundamental contribution to the theory of colonial control. His colonial assemblies, partly elected and partly nominated, while having a slightly stronger control of the local executive, are simply the *Délégations* of Algeria: and, to minimize even this, he also advocated a more immediate control of both local executive and local legislature by the French Parliament. All that his theory really amounts to, then, is that he wants to extend the Algerian system to the other colonies when they are ready, and, in the meantime, lessen the grip of the local *bureaux*.<sup>44</sup> But none of these thinkers have ever advocated the abdication of executive control: that has always been, and remains, the basic feature of French colonial policy.

French thought on this matter thus stands apart from English. The normal English trend was towards, first representative, and then responsible government, by which was meant the self-government of each colony by its elected representatives and the responsibility of the executive to the local legislature. It also meant a disappearance of the executive officials of the mother-country,—something inconceivable in the French colonies. In no case, however, even with Algeria, which affords the closest parallel to the advanced British colonies, have the French got beyond the stage of representative government, nor have they even reached that in the sense of being able to discuss all matters, political as well as economic. The Legislative Councils of the Australian States in the thirties and forties of last century were far more powerful and had more extensive functions than the Algerian councils of to-day. A more legitimate comparison is with Britain's Crown Colonies. Even there, the position is different. In them, development is by a gradually increasing participation of the natives in the work of government, both on its economic and political sides. The councils of Nigeria or Fiji, where conditions practically duplicate those of the French colonies, prove that. They are not self-governing in any sense, yet they discuss matters of all kinds, even those involving general policy, and the Government considers, if it does not of necessity act upon, their views. Yet,

<sup>42</sup> P. Doumer, *L'Indo-Chine Française* (1905), p. 362.

<sup>43</sup> Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, p. 358.

<sup>44</sup> Sarraut (1923), *op. cit.*, pp. 104-107.

save in West Africa since 1924, the French have had no native councils of this kind! In India, which may be compared with France's North African possessions, the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and the subsequent council-schemes exemplify this untrammelled nature of development still more clearly, and in all cases alike, the British changes are in the direction of self-government,—not necessarily self-government from a European view-point, but self-rule in some way or other. They are genuinely developmental and aim at an all-round political education, whereas the French conception does not go beyond the profferment of economic advance and a limited control of the annual budget.

The result is that the problem remains unsolved in the French Empire. The existing organization is inadequate even for Algeria, where it is found in its more developed form, and ridiculously anomalous for Indo-China. Even the Tunisian reforms of 1922, though somewhat more liberal and at least systematic, do not seem to take into account the needs of general development. Elsewhere, representative assemblies are practically non-existent, in so far as they influence policy or tend in the direction of self-government. The most progressive part of the existing organization, that in Algeria and Tunisia, leaves no scope for the future: nor is it obvious how it can do so, as long as the French conception is that colonial assemblies can develop only in the direction of partially controlling the budget,—and even that is a goal far distant on the horizon for most colonies. Pressing problems have already emerged in this connection. As Algerian history has demonstrated, it is difficult to keep economic matters distinct from political. Every tax or appropriation touches the whole life of the State, and to deny this is to accept a purely artificial view of government. If this is admitted, the theory that self-government is economic must be widened to admit political matters; while, if it is refused, then to make theory conform with reality, the vetoing powers of the governors or the Council of State must continually be in operation.

Then, again, there is the demand of native interests for self-expression. The education of the natives has gone on apace, and political discontent has increased *pari passu*. Such natives must be represented in some form or other, especially since the enfranchisement of certain sections of Algerians in 1919 created a precedent more modern than the case of 1848. The recognition that whole classes of natives in one colony could become citizens raises the whole issue. France used previously to explain away the existence of the privileged natives of the Senegalese communes as an historical accident, but this argument, poor at any time, can no longer hold since the law of 1919, despite its insistence on individual worthiness,

has created a practically similar position afresh.<sup>45</sup> Even the backward natives have a larger degree of self-government in the adjacent British colonies of West Africa ; and the more advanced Arabs and Berbers of the north point to the concession of self-government in Italian Libya in 1919 and the status of Egypt, and contrast the inadequacy of the position as it has been in Algeria since 1898. Then in Indo-China, which is perhaps the most vociferous of all the colonies, the natives point to the *Volksraad* the Dutch have instituted in Java and look round to their own lack of a federal legislative body.<sup>46</sup> The rising force of native discontent and a comparison with conditions elsewhere are joining to make changes inevitable, and the question is, not whether they shall be ceded, but how they will come !

France thus has perhaps a more elaborate administrative theory than any other colonial Power, but a woefully incomplete, almost a ridiculous, political policy. For default of this she oscillates between that undue repression which is noticeable in most colonies and an equally uncalled-for liberalism, as, for instance, with the wholesale concession of Algerian naturalization in 1919. What is needed is a general theory providing for a moderate and uniform advance,—a theory based on native councils on the West African model for the purely native communities and for an extension of the idea of panel representation so that it would include all the functions allowed by the British theory of representative government.<sup>47</sup> Such a change would at once clarify and meet the situation ; and there seems no reason, beyond the inordinate degree of central officialdom, why it could not be brought about. Certainly, the existing attitude, that political matters must be postponed until the economic crisis of France and the colonies is overcome, is unjustified. France has done little beyond relying on the Algerian device of 1898, as extended by the cession of budgetary autonomy in 1900 ; so that to-day she has neither a theory nor a practical rule to meet the problems in this connection, and is frankly drifting and depending more than anything else on a policy of inhibitions. She will have minor economic councils to aid the local executive, and counts herself liberal if there is a little representation accorded to the natives on those councils. But nothing more exists, and nothing more liberal has ever been contemplated. The emphasis on assimilation and association to the contrary, it is, therefore, a moot point still as to how far the theory of *domination* characterizes

<sup>45</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 8/11/15, Senate, 31/1/19.

<sup>46</sup> J.-A. Collet, *L'Evolution de l'Esprit indigène aux Indes Orientales Néerlandaises* (1921), p. 91.

<sup>47</sup> For furthestmost French move in this direction, see *Colonies et Marine*, 1922, p. 224, or March-April, 1921, p. 162. For demands, see *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 10/2/14.

French colonial policy. With a political theory that does not go beyond comparatively unimportant economic councils, there is certainly much to be said for this contention, especially in view of the placid content with which the French colonial writers regard this situation.

## CHAPTER IV

### GENERAL NATIVE POLICY

FRANCE has approached her native problems with a point of view obscured by a conflict between several distinct, and frequently antagonistic, tendencies. On the one hand, there was the "classical spirit" of the eighteenth century,—that curious blend of passion and logic, humanitarianism and egoism. The Frenchman tends to be a confirmed ideologist, arguing from *a priori* considerations to the neglect of facts, and even in their face. Time and again in colonial matters (the native code in Annam and New Caledonia, for instance, and the enfranchisement of the Senegalese and Indians), he has preferred to sacrifice an applicable but logically imperfect theory to one which, while logically unassailable, was of dubious practical utility. It is in this connection that the oft-quoted phrase, "the excessive logic of the French spirit," has a very real significance. The Frenchman is thus a logician, a philosopher, blindly following one trend of argument perchance to the neglect of others; but he is also a sentimentalist and an inveterate proselytizer,—the offspring of these united tendencies being assimilation in every branch of activity. He is not only a builder of theories and a believer in symmetry but also a worshipper of natural rights, and thus it has often happened (as with the enfranchisement of the slaves in 1848 or the Algerians in 1919) that even his *a priori* theories and every vestige of past policy have been swept aside by a *furor* of unreasoning humanitarian emotion. On the other hand, there is a brusque military point of view, perceiving its end only in the light of the intervening obstacles to be destroyed. When this phase is in the ascendant, the Frenchman views all things native as barbaric survivals, and as hindrances in the way of conquest, centralization and symmetry. French policy, especially in the native field, has been the history of the conflict between these various tendencies: idealism freed the slaves in 1848 and later set up the policy of assimilation in all its branches; and militarism was responsible for the painful nature of so much of French colonization and for such native policies as *cantonement* and *refoulement*, both of which may be described as segregation based on a continual withdrawal,—progressive annihilation, in fact.

The two conflicting ideas had existed side by side as long ago as Colbert's time. He had proposed on the one hand "completely to exterminate" the Iroquois, and, on the other, "to call the inhabitants of the country into community of life with the French" and to instruct them "in the maxims of our religion and even of our customs." That is, he wavered between extermination and assimilation, just as Napoleon III did in Algeria two centuries later. The presence of these conflicting traits explains, too, why subjection and spoliation were the lot of the Algerians and complete equality the destiny of certain Senegalese; and why the natives of the French towns in India had all the rights of Parisians, whereas the Congo natives became virtual serfs. Their respective fates were decided by that trend of French theory which was dominant for the time being.

But, in the main, and despite the enfranchisement of the slaves in 1848 and Napoleon III's playing with the idea of "an Arab Kingdom," the native policy of the early years of the Second French Empire was based on a neglect of native interests. An unduly prolonged military conquest commenced a driving-back or *refoulement* of the natives, and the needs of European settlers continued it. Many reasons combined to bring this about. The premature emancipation of the negroes in the sugar-colonies, without the slightest preparation, had failed, and, by failing, had discredited the idea of liberalism in native policy, for, in the fifties and sixties, the only conceivable liberalism was one of development along the lines of European democracy. Moreover, colonization at this juncture was in the hands of the military and was construed as an essentially military venture. Algeria had no civil government till 1871, and naturally soldiers of the Empire, Pèrè Bugeaud excepted, knew nothing and cared less of the complexities of native, and especially of Moslem, organization. Added to this was an ignorance of Islam, even amongst the civil administrators, and a contempt of the natives, not as inferior beings it is true, but as backward individuals, "dust of humanity," who had evolved no civilization. And in Algeria a further complicating feature was that the continued resistance (France had not reached Kabylie in 1868) engendered a feeling of exasperation which found vent in an insensate, but natural, desire for extermination.<sup>1</sup>

All of these tendencies joined to account for the policy of *refoulement*, which amounted to a continual driving back of the natives and a destruction of their organization. Why the two should have been necessary is not clear, but the French did not stop at the idea of segregation, and insisted on destruction as well. The point of view was such

<sup>1</sup> L. Vignon, *La France dans l'Afrique du Nord* (1888), pp. 190, 243 *et seq.*, or *Un Programme de Politique Coloniale* (1919), p. 188 *et seq.*

that only the numerical impossibility of such an outcome prevented extermination. France insisted on a *tabula rasa*, and was indifferent as to how this came about, so long as the methods were economical. The bald statement of such a policy seems almost beyond credence at this date, and yet it was consistently pursued in Algeria until 1870 and beyond. Marshal Randon's policy of *cantonnement* from 1852 onwards amounted to this, and it continued even after Napoleon III in 1863 ordered the maintenance of the natives in their lands. *Refoulement*, with its consequences, was the only *motif* in Algerian settlement till 1871, and the dominant one long after that.

The entire Arab policy of France at this date was a compound of ignorance and exasperation, seeking expression in destruction. The French had an unenviable record of *razzias* in Algeria, and even more disruptive than the purely military advance were the changes brought about in Arab organization. From 1830 onwards there was a long list of reforms the effect of which was to bring anarchy into Arabo-Berber civilization, resting as this did on unquestionable religious and traditional bases. To question meant to destroy, and change meant dissolution. There was, for instance, the initial confiscation of religious foundations (*habous*), the abolition of native criminal-justice, the breaking-up of tribal organization, the expropriation of native lands, both for rebellion and by the abuse of inapplicable laws (especially by the law of 1873), the suppression of *cadis* or native judges, the compulsory and ill-timed individualization of land tenures, and so on.<sup>2</sup>

Islam was immobile, "turning its back to the future and its face to the past"; and, at that time, with the daring of ignorance, France sought to make Moslem organization conform to modernization or to smash it. Some features of this organization France did not know, others she frankly ignored, as, for instance, the fundamentally religious nature of land and civil matters in a Moslem country. The Algerian rulers knew that what would be a purely temporal reform in Europe might affect the bases of religious belief in a Moslem land, but, in face of this knowledge, persisted in reforms that involved results out of all proportion to their own intrinsic importance. The whole intricate question of the "personal statute" of the Mohammedan was a case in point: all questions of marriage and successions and land-tenure and ownership of goods turned on this matter, the regulation of which depended on confused passages of Koranic law. France, seeking uniformity and simplicity, endeavoured to make it solely a secular matter, as simply regulated as obtaining a birth certificate in a Paris *arrondissement*. Naturally, the upshot was confusion and injustice and burning religious

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter I, Section III, *infra*.

resentment. Such measures at once alienated the natives, and the trouble was that, once attempted, they were irremediable. Once religious sensibilities were offended, especially with a people like the Algerian Mohammedans who regulate even the ordinary affairs of everyday life by religious sanctions, France could not retrace her steps and, by annulling the attempted reform, restore the *status quo*. The matter was by no means as simple as that, for the resentment remained.

The basic difficulty lay in the absolute conflict between the codes of France and Islam. For instance, in recognizing in 1830 "the free exercise of the Mohammedan religion," the French construed these words literally; the Mohammedans, on the other hand, took them to mean a freedom from outside intervention in most matters concerning property and civil-affairs, which for them are dealt with in the Koran, which is rather a code of government than a book of purely religious precepts. In particular, this would have taken away all judicial functions from the French,—clearly an impossible position. To overcome the *contretemps*, therefore, the French were reduced to the subterfuge of declaring that the agreement of 1830 had been annulled by the consequent revolt, and that a hasty convention signed after the demolition of Fort l'Empereur could not logically be invoked to settle details of organization half a century later.<sup>3</sup>

But the general difficulty remained, and more and more the French adopted the negative policy of destruction. Even Leroy-Beaulieu, than whom no one had colonial interests more at heart, held that all that would be necessary would be to break the tribal system, collective property, and the polygamous family, concluding that "these three points obtained, there would only remain certain details which would easily solve themselves."<sup>4</sup> He might have added that, if these reforms were obtained, there would remain no Arab organization, but only a mass of unorganized individuals, floating between a shattered past and a hopeless future. Indeed, France seemed to be aiming at such a consummation as far as possible. The tribes were thrust back, their lands expropriated, and their organizations attacked. Decrees attempted even to obliterate the old tribal names and to split up the tribes into smaller unities called *douars*. Tribal organization was obliterated in the Tell and diminished throughout the interior; and, when France reached the outskirts of Kabylie in 1868, the confusion became worse.<sup>5</sup> The difference between Arabs and Berbers was not sufficiently grasped, and so the

<sup>3</sup> R. Aynard, *L'Œuvre française en Algérie* (1912), pp. 144–145.

<sup>4</sup> L. de Saussure, *Psychologie de la Colonisation française dans ses Rapports avec les Sociétés Indigènes* (1899), p. 89.

<sup>5</sup> Aynard (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 432.

modified feudalism of the Arabs, at least in so far as the French sanctioned it, was superimposed on the fighting democratic Berbers of the Kabylie mountains. France, by partially Islamizing the Aurès, the people of which had fought for centuries against such a consummation, was naturally faced by a series of insurrections from 1879 onwards. It was only in the far desert-oases, where limited resources held back the French, and where perforce familial and judicial and property matters were left intact in the hands of the natives, that there was no trouble. Elsewhere in Berber lands, the tribal organizations of government, especially the tribal gathering or *djemaa*, a ready-made legislative and executive organ, were as far as possible uprooted. The only result was chaos and hatred where abstention would have meant tranquillity.

Perhaps the basic cause for the failure of these early native policies was that the acts enforced were based on no religious policy. In a country where religion permeated every phase of life, France had evolved no such policy, and, save when Bugeaud sent the Roches mission to the Holy City of Karouan in 1841, had not even seriously attempted to. Indeed, until the time of the newer policies of 1889, Bugeaud was the only French colonial of note who really stood against the *refoulement* idea. He emphasized the importance of native co-operation, and held that the association of the natives in economic development and a respecting of their customs, were the high roads to success. "Each Arab who enriches himself will become our partisan," he wrote; "he will be an enemy less and an ally more."<sup>6</sup>

But this was a voice in the wilderness, and France maintained the policy of *refoulement*, and carried it with her forces of occupation to her other domains. The age-old and quite adequate organizations of Indo-China were simply broken, save during the interim rule of Paul Bert (1886), and the destruction was the worse because of the religious basis and the force of tradition in Indo-Chinese life. The mandarin-system, based on competitive examination and the Chinese respect for learning, could have been adapted to French uses: instead, France simply destroyed it, and alienated both governing-classes and people.<sup>7</sup> In the Pacific, the same thing occurred; the New Caledonians were ruthlessly driven back to "native reserves" in the mountain interior, and their chiefly organization broken; the Tahitians found their native kingdoms shattered; the Marquesans were reduced to paralysed masses of individuals; and, in the whole ocean, only in the isolated Iles sous le Vent were the native organizations respected,—and they were, and still are, an exception. In Africa, the Congo and the Senegal had a similar experience,

<sup>6</sup> Article by Besson in *L'Afrique française*, March, 1921, p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> Chap. XI, II, *infra*. De Saussure (1899), *op. cit.*, pp. 143-149.

although in four communes of the latter, ample recompense was deemed to have been given by bestowing on the natives all the rights of French citizens. And right through the period of militaristic expansion (1894–1906) this tendency remained, and may still be discerned in the French colonial organization. Arthur Girault, the most exhaustive analyst of French colonial methods, sums up in favour of a strong hand. “A hand of iron beneath a glove of velvet,—that must always be the rule in our relations with the natives”<sup>8</sup>; and colonial theorists frequently reiterate that “domination” is the only reasonable and practical policy in so far as the natives are concerned, or at the least, “a policy of beneficent tutelage.” The *refoulement motif*, predominant to 1889, has never quite disappeared.

But, by the time Tunisia and Indo-China were acquired, that is, when France was commencing the organization of her new Empire in earnest, it was evident that there had to be a new theory of native policy,—or rather, *some* theory, because previous policies had been almost entirely negative and haphazard. The millions of Indo-China and Tunisia could clearly not be driven back as the Arabo-Berbers of Algeria had been, and France had to evolve a plan of accommodation. Moreover, even had the pressure of population not necessitated a changed policy in Tunisia and the Far East, the obvious breakdown of *refoulement* in Algeria showed the need for some change.

With the need thus evident, the direction of change—towards assimilation—was decided upon with curiously little hesitation. The idea of assimilation fitted in with the general mentality of the French in the later eighties, and seemed to be so obvious and so suited to the needs of the occasion as to admit of no dispute. In the first place, it was based on the classical spirit,—that blend of philosophical humanitarianism and universal panaceas and a naïvely egotistic belief in the absolute finality of French civilization. French civilization represented the apex of development, the matrix of life; and the highest duty of a nation was to extend to less fortunate peoples its universally applicable principles. As Condorcet said, “a good law is good for all men, just as a sound logical proposition is sound everywhere.” Assuming that the bases of French civilization were justified (and to deny this would have been to deny the rule of reason), it was only logical to wish that it should be extended, as far as possible, to all men. That they could accept and appreciate its blessings was beyond doubt, for was not the veriest savage “Man,”—that reasoning creation of the philosophers? Isolating man from physiological and environmental differences, the philosophers had created an “absolute man,” a creature of reason and logic, and argued

<sup>8</sup> Girault (1921), *op. cit.*, Part 2, p. 165.

that, if the obscuring masses of superstition and barbarous institutions were removed, this "absolute man" could respond to the needs of Western civilization. It was not a question of Betsimisaraka or Bassamba or Malekula cannibal, but of "Man" in this sense,—a reasoning human being everywhere potentially and intrinsically the same, and distinguished one from the other by surface differences which were not so much fundamental as accidental and eradicable. The philosophers did not see an anthropophagic savage sunk in an abyss of degradation and almost sub-human: nor did they see an Annamite, say, embedded in the accumulated tradition of centuries, and thinking no thought and performing no action unrelated to that tradition: they saw only an abstract personality, so constituted that all were on an equality,—"Man." This triumph of logic, though non-existent in actuality, and as impossible of realization as "the economic man" or "Crusoe" of the classical economists, and though as untrue to actual fact as Adolf Bastian's later theory of *Elementargedanken*, served as the basis on which the entire native policy of the French was erected after 1889. Everything depended on this basic assumption of a potential and realizable equality between all men, and on the universal applicability of just laws. "We wish to make a declaration for all men, for all times, and for all countries, and to serve as an example for the world," said the promulgators of the Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1792; and this idea was revived in the later nineteenth century, and instituted as the very *primum mobile* for colonial activity in every field and direction.<sup>9</sup>

The situation was dominated by Rousseau's interpretation of savage man and by the enthronement of logic and reason: mere mundane matters like impassable geographical and racial barriers did not count. The philosophers had never seen a cannibal-feast on the Marquesan *maraes*, or the refined methods of torture in Dahomey, or the organized brutishness of West African life; and looked on savages as harmless and rather interesting mortals something like the miniature blackboys who waited on Milady, or as blissfully attractive as Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's creations, or, at a later date, Loti's Rarahu; and to the assimilator, all men were capable of becoming civilized, for was there not an essential unity of mankind? This was almost a religion in France in the late eighties, and, at the Colonial Congress of 1889, which gave birth to the theory of assimilation in its modern form, one speaker had to withdraw the phrase "inferior races."<sup>10</sup> Gustave Le Bon alone stood

<sup>9</sup> For growth of this idea, see Vignon (1919), *op. cit.*, p. 191 *et seq.*,—a masterly analysis.

<sup>10</sup> *Recueil des Délibérations du Congrès Colonial National, 1889-1890*, debate in Vol. I, p. 16.

out against the sentimental and subjective dogmatism of the majority, and his speech was bitterly attacked.<sup>11</sup> The prevailing argument was that if the Romans could so completely civilize the savages of Gaul, surely the Frenchmen, with their wider culture and greater advantages, could win over the Asiatics and Africans in their colonial Empire! The only difference between the most primitive cannibal of the Upper Congo and a Paris professor, to this school, was in the degree of education. All men were potentially equal, and there were no impassable barriers in the way of the realization, almost the immediate realization, of that equality. Taine had said that, in the preceding century, race simply did not exist on the Stage or in literature, and certainly, in 1889, the existence of the most elementary racial facts was denied. Ancestral heritages, geographical conditions, innate racial differences—none of these were admitted: there was nothing in the civilization of Annamites or Arabs that could not be obliterated, and nothing to prevent a complete transplantation of our culture to them.

Such a position seems remarkable, and yet it may be easily accounted for by the lack of any innate sense of racial superiority with the French, combined with a certain naïve egoism regarding French civilization and strengthened by faith in a logical principle. A formula was held to be sufficiently powerful to overcome the most obdurate foreign race: assimilation could do everything. Thus, even Paul Bert, a liberal, as his first duty on reaching Tonkin, fixed the Rights of Man to the walls of Hanoi, and his colleagues in general saw in the age-old Indo-Chinese civilizations "only institutions hostile to our domination," institutions which "we had to break in order to transform these races to the image of our own."

The next factor supporting this position was the belief in logic. If it were reasonable for a certain principle to apply to the conditions of France, and if the bases of that principle were unassailable there, it stood to reason that they would be so anywhere. Otherwise, there would be varying concepts of what was logical in varying latitudes,—a position intolerable if reason were to be in the ascendant. Thus, if logic decreed a certain symmetry and order in Paris, that symmetry had to hold in Saigon and Algiers and Réunion: and, to support this, there entered the centralizing tendency so obvious in French organization.

The upshot was belief in assimilation to French models in every mode of life,—social, economic, political, racial. The colonies had to be French departments and nothing else, and the natives French citizens. The idea was by no means a new one in French colonization. The Convention, in the Constitution of the Year III, had declared that "the colonies are an integral part of the Republic, and are submitted to the same

<sup>11</sup> Le Bon's address is in full in de Saussure, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-133.

constitutional laws. They are divided into *départements*.”<sup>12</sup> The theory of assimilation could not be more simply stated, and it is a striking commentary on the attitude towards all the anthropological advance in the intervening century to note how easily and completely such a theory could be adopted in the changed conditions of 1889. But there was this difference,—that no previous system was as rigid as that of 1889. Even Rousseau had admitted variations between savage peoples, and even the revolutionary Constitution of the Year VII had recognized the need of special laws for certain colonies : whereas, on the other hand, the Colonial Congress of 1889 insisted on a rigid universality of its theory. If facts and theory did not coincide, the facts had to be moulded to the theory, and not *vice versa*. “All the efforts of colonization,” ran its final resolution, “must tend to propagate amongst the natives our language, our methods of work, and gradually the spirit of our civilization.”<sup>13</sup> It was a doctrine of assimilation *à outrance*, exceptions to which would be confessions of failure.

The peculiar thing is how this theory was accepted, and actually put into force, without discussion or exposition. Not only was it not attacked and discussed : it was hardly mentioned, so obvious and incontrovertible did it seem. Le Bon stood out, but then everybody knew that he was a heretic ! And this attitude was evident in the writings of the leading colonial theorists. Girault saw in assimilation only the opposite of the English autonomy, only a centralizing point of view : Wahl, in his authoritative work on Algeria, accepted it as a matter of course : de Lanessan, even in his *Principes de Colonisation*, did not take the trouble to analyse it : Leroy-Beaulieu accepted it without question : and Vignon (at first) took it as meaning a fusion of the natives with their conquerors and a gradual penetration of French ideas—consummations so natural and obvious as to admit of no cavil. Not one effective voice was raised either against the fundamentally illogical nature of assimilation, or against the virtual impossibility of converting such a theory into practice. Liberty, equality, and fraternity were in the air, all construed on the best orthodox lines of the *Code Napoléon* and eighteenth-century “reason” ; and France saw Papeete and Dakar and Insulah only as distant suburbs of Paris, different at the moment but ultimately to be brought into line.

From 1889 onwards, assimilation was thus accepted. Everywhere, political development was to be as far as possible Europeanization : hence the representation of the colonies in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, and the institution of *communes* as the basis of local government in the farthest colony. Algeria and Cochin-China, both hotbeds

<sup>12</sup> Isaac Report to Congress of 1889, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 5 *et seq.*

<sup>13</sup> Report of Congress of 1889, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 21 ; Vol. II, p. 51.

of assimilation, received practically the same organization, the violent contrasts between Berber and Annamite society notwithstanding. The French criminal Code, and even the civil Code, were introduced everywhere, and local customs not taken into account. All education was in French and on French literary models, for the pearl-diver of the Paumotus as for the Senegalese tribesmen. No colony and no sphere of activity, except the protectorate of Tunisia, stood outside this theory in the nineties.<sup>14</sup>

Naturally, difficulties soon emerged, and it became evident how much the assimilators were the slaves of a theory. The fundamental criticism was that this system, introduced in the name of logic, was essentially illogical, for how was it logical to transfer a theory based on one set of facts to other, and quite opposite, sets of facts? Such a transference meant going from like to unlike, and it would have been just as logical to have argued from the old-established Chinese civilization of Annam and to have urged its extension everywhere, for did it not perfectly meet the situation, had it not achieved balance by the very fact of centuries of survival, and was it not based on a philosophy?

Secondly, assimilation was not founded on facts, but on theory and desires; and the call of the new colonial position was for hard facts, particularly in the economic sphere. Assimilation not only neglected facts, but positively flew in their face. It was a dream, a tendency, an ideal, but not a policy capable of being enforced in practice, as the breakdown in New Caledonia and Cochinchina showed, and as was manifested by the position of the native "citizens" of the Senegalese *communes* and the five Indian towns.

Further, it approached colonial problems from the wrong end. The colonies, presenting essentially new problems as they did, needed some practical compromise to meet the facts, and not any theory superimposed from above. Each colony was a world in itself, each had special problems, and, divided between the Moslem and Confucian and fetishist worlds, had practically nothing in common except the tricolor. It was the differences between them that had to be stressed, and, especially in the sphere of native affairs, a series of policies evolved to take into account these differences. There were abysmal gaps between the cannibals of the Marquesas and the semi-civilized Senegalese, and even between the Laos Kha and the Annamite within Indo-China. There were differences within and between the colonies, and so the uniform automatism of assimilation was absurd.

Here entered the anthropological argument. In the last years of

<sup>14</sup> For its extreme form in the Antilles, see *Compte Rendu du Congrès des Anciennes Colonies*, 1909, p. 203.

the century, Bastian's theory of *Elementargedanken*, viewing savage man the world over as very much on an equality, was dying, and the organized complexity of every native society was being demonstrated,—a complexity largely determined by local conditions. Taine had led the way by stressing the fundamental importance of environment, and the thundering declamations of the German school under Ratzel and Frobenius had gone further, making environmental conditions so important as to shatter the old theory of "Abstract Man" and to postulate essentially varying types. Then, from different angles, Gobineau and Darwin and Virchow were all helping to dissipate the French notions of universalism and assimilation to one culture, and, in particular, the positivist ethnological researches of the de Broca school gave a practical support to the above-mentioned theorists. But the greatest of all in influencing French colonial thought was Gustave Le Bon in his *Lois Psychologiques de l'Evolution des Peuples*, and even in his protests at the Colonial Congress of 1889. And the point was that all of these works, philosophical and anthropological, just coincided with the expansionist period of French colonial policy.<sup>15</sup> Interest in these problems, as it were, focused from many directions on one point, and the result was to show the absurdity of assimilation in theory and practice.

In consequence, it became evident that civilizations could not be uprooted in the facile manner of the assimilators, and completely new civilizations implanted, irrespective of geographical conditions and religion and the traditions of the past, and the needs of the situation, and the myriad other bases on which culture was built. "Civilizations are incommunicable," said Gobineau, and this was equally obvious as one descended the scale. Indeed, any tampering with the lower civilizations was even more serious than with the more advanced, because, the lower one went in the scale of civilization, the more were the various parts of life interdependent and fused into one inextricable whole, and the more even a slight innovation had revolutionary results. A reform at one stage meant not only a change of that magnitude, but a disturbance of the whole balance, and by reason of the interaction between the various parts of native life, a destructive influence on practically the whole culture. Native civilizations were built on custom and immobility, and, once questioning and change came, the whole tended to topple.

Nor was the change merely one affecting the structure of the native civilization: it caused a drift in native minds, perhaps the greatest problem colonial reformers have to face. The native, seeing the foundations of the old order crumble (and it must be remembered that almost certainly the structure that was being destroyed was on a religious basis, or at

<sup>15</sup> Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

least some manner of religious sanction), and drifting between old and new, became a passive and inert disbeliever; and, in the Pacific, and Western Madagascar, and parts of West Africa and the Congo, simply died, in that causeless way in which natives can die. The disease of change, coupled with the disillusioned hopelessness that change engenders under such conditions, had smitten them down. For such people, an unwisely hastened assimilation, an assimilation based on destroying instead of merely adding to what was already there, meant racial decline: with the more virile natives, it was ineffective, and simply meant a breach with the past and no adequate return for the future. For these sections, and this argument applies especially to the Annamites and Arabs, the reform was a failure. Native mentality did not change in the manner expected by the Paris theorists: the more complaisant natives may have added the new elements to what was already there, just as they tolerantly added the white man's gods to their already well-stocked pantheon; but the additional elements remained superfluous and extraneous—over and above, and in no sense synthesized with, their culture as a whole. A race can evolve only in the sense of its own mentality, only in the shadow of its own traditions: and it was the failure to recognize this fact that vitiated so many of the French policies for the Arab and the Annamite. The Moslem or the Confucian was a creature of his religious past, and apart from that knew no existence: to break this down meant not only "de-racializing" him, but reducing him to simply a living animal, with no place in the universe. As concerned the native, therefore, assimilation turned out to be either unavailing or destructive.

Moreover, if the race in question could shed its own past so easily, it was clear that some necessary element of vitality was wanting, for such an anæmic acquiescence symbolized a general decadence. Real progress could only be in the light of the native's past and on the basis of the long anterior development: development had to be in some sense a continuation and not a cataclysmic break. As Le Bon said, "the laws of social evolution are as rigorous as those of the evolution of organisms," and entailed gradual adaptation as the primary necessity of development.

This meant that such success as was ostensibly due to the process of assimilation was probably a superficial one, and even the assimilators were perplexed by the ephemeral nature of the changes produced by their Arab policy. While it was impossible to make the Arabs of the interior *douars* adopt French ideas (they did not respond to the facilities for naturalization, or acquiring French "civil status," or education or legal opportunities), those nearer the towns or in the coastal belt acquired simply a veneer of civilization, shed on the slightest pretext. Even

M. P. Coeur, a believer in assimilation and one of its theoretical exponents, had to admit that twenty years passed under the French flag did not change the mentality of the Arab,<sup>16</sup> and that often repatriated *turcos*, who, according to the theory of assimilation, should, by coming into contact with the order and discipline of French life, have been agents of civilization, were most active in stirring up the Moslem masses to disaffection. Their French civilization was laid aside with their uniform. With the enfranchised Senegalese, the case was still clearer, for the majority, having taken no uniform, had not changed even to that extent. The gap of centuries and tens of centuries could not be bridged in a moment, even by education. *Natura non facit saltus*: and the native was not such a superman as to be able to master the spirit and the details of Occidental civilization in a few years, even had he the desire to do so.

Arguing on this line, one reaches the next flaw in assimilation,—that there is no justification for the position that what is beneficial for the peculiar conditions of European civilization and the idiosyncrasies of European mentality may serve likewise for the African fetishist or the Asiatic ancestor-worshipper. “The beneficent institution of fee-simple” is a case in point: even the Torrens Act, designed especially to prevent confusion and abuse with land-titles, produced quite opposite results in Algeria and Tunisia, because, failing to take into account the childish wastefulness and the naïve unsophistication of the natives in question in matters of alienation (from our point of view), it proved a means of spoliation and loss to them. So too, the idea of individualism, transplanted wholesale from Europe to societies organized on a group-basis, and thinking only in terms of communalism, proved a disintegrating factor rather than an advance.<sup>17</sup> The idea of individual responsibility for crimes in New Caledonia, for instance, led, not to safeguards for the innocent and punishment for the guilty, but to a disintegration of tribal cohesion and social security. And the individualization of land-tenure in Algeria and Tonkin and Tahiti produced results quite opposite to those anticipated, and proved in many cases a doubtful advance, if an advance at all. Similarly with the abolition of slavery in the sugar-islands and the attack on domestic slavery in Africa, both of which, the latter in particular, were shown to have a considerable number of good points, under the conditions of life in that particular environment.<sup>18</sup>

All of these failures showed that there is no universally applicable social law, and that the determining feature of native policy should be not European ideas, not any general theory, but the conditions of the

<sup>16</sup> M. P. Coeur, *L'Assimilation des Indigènes Musulmans*.

<sup>17</sup> S. H. Roberts, *Population Problems of the Pacific* (1926), p. 226.

<sup>18</sup> L. Vignon, *Un Programme de Politique Coloniale* (1919), p. 374 et seq.

tribe and the question at issue, and not as an isolated question but as a component part of the whole structure of the tribal civilization. A neglect of this curious interaction of the various phases of native life explains why essentially good ideas for the tribe in question, may, if introduced at an inopportune moment or as unconnected with the general scheme of native life, result in untold harm: and how much the more will this apply to ideas which, however desirable or otherwise from a European point of view, are inapplicable to native life? It is the general fabric of native policy, with its inextricably interwoven threads, the good affecting the bad, and *vice versa*, that has to be considered: and the only possible validity of any reform is in its relation, its assimilability, to the whole native structure and to that peculiar native thought which vitalizes the whole and clothes it with meaning. Abstract logic or desirability under other conditions is quite beside the point, for, if anything, native life in general is organized and interconnected illogically: custom knows little of logic; and native life, if stable and virile, means the rule of custom. And it is there, rather than with any outside theory or with any system painfully evolved for a part of another continent and under the conditions of Western industrialism, that the problem lies. Any valid solution must be in accord with the existing premises, and not determined by one's concept of what is desirable in the abstract.

The need was clearly for natural development on local lines, based on the needs of each particular tribal entity, and taking into account the conditions surrounding tribal life; in a word, for a growth from below, supervised and directed, it is true, by the French officials, but still on natural foundations and proportioned to the facts of the situation. This method of approach was the only safeguard against "deracialization" and the resultant sapping of native vigour, and the only preventive of the submergence of the native, a disillusioned and cynically hopeless being, beneath the flood of new ideas. Evolution may be hastened, but not completely changed from the old ancestral road, for that way lies uprooting and mere destruction. The institutions that had survived the past were the security of the future, and not, as the advocates of *refoulement* and assimilation argued, simply obstacles to progress and efficiency; the very fact of survival in unfavourable circumstances was sufficient to prove the contrary.

It was little wonder, then, that the assimilation of the natives to French standards proved impossible in practice. Haiti, Liberia, and the French Antilles demonstrated this where the majority of the population were negroes; and the absurdities of the *régime* in the Senegal and French India were bywords in French colonial circles,—a perpetual

colonial comedy. In the excessive zeal of liberalism in 1848, the natives of five *communes* in the Senegal were given the rights of citizens and organization on an entirely French model. In practice "they came to vote in disciplined groups, under the command of native chiefs, fittingly paid in advance by the candidate": and competent observers, with a typically French absence of racial discrimination, hold that the natives so privileged, the Oulouf, have become insolent ne'er-do-wells.<sup>19</sup> In French India, where the natives have voted since 1875, Brahmins and pariahs cannot touch each other, yet are equal before the electoral urn: and Hindu native leaders really monopolize the votes. In Algeria there was never a *contretemps* of this kind, although assimilation in education and justice and land-matters resulted in the gravest abuses, and the native suffered almost as much as during the previous period of *refoulement*. In Indo-China the position was worse, because there the attempt to progress through the shattering of the religious-civil Chinese civilization meant the passive resistance of the natives, and thus a ban on all advance. Until the idea of advance on native lines was sanctioned, every province of Indo-China, especially Cochinchina and Tonkin, languished.

Under these circumstances, it would be no exaggeration to say that the unwise assimilation of Algeria and Indo-China to French models in the eighties and nineties of last century represented the nadir of French colonization, because the entries were all on the debit side of the ledger, and the suffering had no noticeable compensation. Assimilation was found to be impossible in Arab and Oriental countries, because of the linking of State and society with religion, and because of the ineradicability of Mohammedanism and Buddhism: while, in negro countries, still different objections arose, for such a development was premature, and its goal unwise, at least for the mass of the natives. Even had such a forced development been possible, and even had the superiority of European civilization been so little as to admit of a bridging of the gap in one person's lifetime, assimilation for the majority meant exploitation by an oligarchy, the tyranny of an *intelligentsia*-trained minority, as the sugar-islands clearly proved. Even in Algeria, for instance, it was estimated that, from 1877 to 1901, there were barely 500 intellectuals for a native population of five millions, and many of these had a culture based on ideas such as an Englishman educated in the Middle Ages would have.<sup>20</sup> By a process of elimination, therefore, assimilation was seen to be possible only where there was no ineradicable pre-existing civilization, and, at once, any based on a religion as virile as Mohammedanism fell outside this category. This meant that assimilation was

<sup>19</sup> L. Sonolet, *L'Afrique Occidentale Française* (1912), pp. 12-14.

<sup>20</sup> J. Alaude, *La Question Indigène dans l'Afrique du Nord*, p. 57.

possible only where there was a European majority or where the natives were so backward as to know no adequate organization. But assimilation in the first case was meaningless, and in the second absurd and worthless ! And it afforded no solution for the great problems of France's Moslem and Buddhist populations. In a word, it was an inapplicable theory, and, so long as it dominated colonial activity, the real position was that the French had no native policy. The native just drifted, and everybody suffered.<sup>21</sup>

The result was that assimilation gradually fell into disrepute. The Colonial Congress of 1889 was unanimously in its favour : that of 1900 was a little dubious, but endorsed its principles : the Congress of 1906 frankly attacked it in every branch. Till 1899 it may be said that assimilation was dominant both in theory and fact : in the next decade, the theory was maintained, but the policy actually enforced was changing, and the "protectorate" idea, sanctioned by the experience of Tunisia and Indo-China (after the time of de Lanessan), was emerging in opposition. Then, during the third stage from 1910 to 1914, assimilation was seen to be no longer tenable in theory, but the new policy had not yet emerged, and there was a drift in actual fact. French efforts in native policy were not made cohesive in this period by any policy.

But, after that, an increasing development on local lines became manifest, and was defined, both in theory and fact, as "*association*,"—a variant of the protectorate idea. The trend had for long been away from assimilation, which by 1906 was seen to be doomed : the difficulty was to determine the new policy, and to let the changing facts become to some degree stabilized, before the new policy was decided upon. New influences were coming into play in the native world in the early part of this century, equally for the negroes and the Moslems and the Buddhists ; and France wanted to know just what those new influences implied before she decided on a new policy. One native policy had been decided upon apart from fact : and, in the light of this experience, France was now proceeding more cautiously, and was to a greater degree letting the theory be moulded by the changing facts themselves. The facts, and not philosophy, were the shaping factor : France, in her native policy, was considering the natives more and policy less,—a change of emphasis forced on her by the exigencies of the practical situation.

The bases of the new policy were simple. It was a cry of—back to the native, emphasize local conditions, consider the past of each tribe, mould policies to the practical needs of the tribe, limit objectives to efforts which can be realized, look on projected reforms as they will

<sup>21</sup> For criticisms, see *L'Afrique Française*, 1923, p. 252 ; Démonstès, *Le Peuple Algérien* (1906), pp. 589–593.

appear to the native, build on the native past by the native present and for the native future, and enlist the co-operation of the natives themselves. It was a rule on native lines, but with a place left for desirable innovations and, as a rule, as far as possible, in the hands of the natives themselves! The objective was limited but practical, and the policy was in essence constructive, and not destructive. Progress was to be realized by gradual and carefully consolidated steps on the firm foundations of the existing native life: there was to be a natural movement from the existing to the desired, and a development from the traditional past, instead of a soul-searing breach with everything that that past entailed to the natives. In a word, it was all that was implied in social education, in the literal sense of "education"—as a "leading-out": and everything depended on the idea of the continuity of institutional advance. No place was left for far-reaching innovations which had proved beneficial under the utterly different conditions of another civilization, separated, as civilizations go, by thousands of years from the scene of the actual experiment, and, even could the gap be bridged by some kind of a time-machine, having nothing in common with it. The old policy had ignored time as well as geography: the new one did not step beyond the immediate problem in the given locality at that particular moment in the evolution of the civilization concerned. This does not mean to say that salutary reforms and efforts of modernization were given no place: it was simply that they were by no means viewed as the sole ends of native policy as they had hitherto been: under the new orientation, they were but one element, and, even then, only to the degree to which they fitted in. Still less was any scheme of reform deemed to be a universal panacea: the idea of universality, and even of general reforms, was now in the discard. The new policy called for an unobtrusive continuation of past development, along the same lines in the main, but with the obstacles removed, and the obviously undesirable features of life as far as possible pruned away.

But, in essence, the development was to be a natural continuation. Of course, coupled with it, was to go reform on European lines, for the French had to look to the future as well as to the past, and had to introduce reforms where breaches with the past were salutary. But the keynote of the policy lay in its dualism. The old policy of assimilation had been a unitary one—development on European lines alone: so too, the new policy, by an excessive reaction, might become equally unitary,—development on native lines alone (or the stagnation that this would imply): but the real goal was in a kind of dyarchy, a sharing of functions between European and native, with development primarily on native lines, and suited to the actual conditions of native existence, but coupled with

such European innovations as would be desirable from time to time. The degree of European interference would be the elastic factor: it would vary from time to time and from place to place, according to the position of the tribe in question and a multitude of facts, such as their temperamental disposition, their economic status, the flexibility of their institutions, and the like. The European share thus continually fluctuated, and on it depended both the reality of co-operation and the reality of progress. It was to be a genuine association of partners, one more advanced and training the other, but along lines which the backward partner could understand and which would be beneficial to him in his own environment. But, in the last resort, the onus of securing progress rested on the European, and he had to secure this objective first of all. The well-being of the native was the aim, and even change on native lines might not be acceptable to the unduly conservative natives: in that case, the European had to bear the brunt of the situation, for, given the fact of economic change, progress there had to be, as a mere standing-still was impossible under the changing circumstances. The fishers of the Congo and the hillmen of Laos could not be left aside: they had to evolve in their own surroundings, and, if the new policy speeded-up the rate of evolution too much, they had to be helped in the process of re-adaptation. *Association* implied joint development, but could not conceivably mean a mere stultification for the native or *laissez-faire* for the European. It involved a difficult division of responsibilities, but it was necessitated by the new forces that, willy-nilly, were changing native life; and it certainly left a tangible place for the native and provided a practicable policy for the European administrator.

The policy thus means the association of both natives and Europeans, a real sphere of activity being left for each. For the native, there is the respect of his own organizations, a development along lines compatible with his past, and a part left for him in the future: and, on the other hand, the European has a place for priority in the scheme, for, while there is a building on the sound foundations of the past, an equally important feature is reform and progress and a reasonable degree of modernization in the future. This co-operation implies a turning of the back upon the two previous native policies,—upon the old idealistic humanitarianism, because its objectives were too inclusive and impractical; and equally upon the policy of exploitation, because it was both undesirable and impolitic. To put the matter as crudely as possible, association pays. Political assimilation was seen to be Utopian, and domination an anachronism: the new *via media* was *association*. Indeed, the logic of the new position was so clear that wonder was expressed at the sway of assimilation for so long. “ Let us regard each colony as a

'native-city,' which must evolve under our direction and with our aid," ran the new theory, but each having a development normal to itself, and not trying unnaturally to conform to the evolution of some other differently situated colony or the mother-country.

The best definition of the new policy came from Jules Harmand, who may be considered as its leading exponent :—

" It teaches always toleration and liberalism in autocracy : it prescribes everywhere a scrupulous respect of manners, customs, and religions : it substitutes everywhere co-operation in place of the exploitation of native forces pure and simple, and instead of the usurpation of their goods and landed property. It is favourable to their intellectual development. Wishing to render their work more personal and interesting, it tends to render it more productive. Seeking a *rapprochement* of spirits and their union in a *rapprochement* of interests, it facilitates submission. On the other hand, a realistic and wise policy of association reserves all the rights of domination with an unshakable firmness, and considers all of its needs. Nor does it acquiesce in preparing or realizing an equality that is never possible : on the contrary, it establishes a certain balance or compensation between reciprocal services. Far from allowing domination to become enervated, it wishes to reinforce it by making it less rough and less hostile. Thus, it aims at making domination more efficient and more productive of reciprocal utilities, at the same time making it more tolerable, and thus reducing to the minimum the always sterile and costly use of force. It wishes to better the lot of the aborigine in all ways, but only in directions that are profitable to him,—by letting him evolve in his own way ; by maintaining each in his place, his function, his rôle ; by touching native customs and traditions with a very light hand only, and, on the contrary, using their organization to reach these objectives. In a word, association is the systematic rejection of assimilation, and tends to substitute for the necessarily rigid and oppressive régime of direct administration *that of indirect rule*, with a conservation, albeit a well-watched and well-directed conservation, of the institutions of the subject people, and with a respect of its past." <sup>22</sup>

This clearly differentiated association from both domination and assimilation, and yet shows that it is no mere jugglery with vague phrases, no mental gymnastics, and that it is, above all things, practical. In a word, it is very akin to the English concept of "indirect rule," or, better still, to the newer idea, wherein the need of State tutelage is more emphasized, and which is called "modified indirect rule." <sup>23</sup> It is a working with the natives and along native lines, in so far as their ideas can be made compatible with the necessary degree of progress,—that is, it is back to native affairs, *as far as possible*. And, in the last phrase, with its implications for the native and for the European, lies the key to the entire situation !

<sup>22</sup> Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>23</sup> For elaboration of this theory, see S. H. Roberts, *Population Problems of the Pacific* (1926), Chap. 7, Part 10.

The idea, in an embryonic form, was found early in French colonization: even when the bulk of French efforts were clearly by direct rule on European models, there was generally some undercurrent based on a *rapprochement* with the natives,—a vague, almost unanalysable understanding which seemed to come naturally to the French and to bewilder their adversaries. Martin and Dupleix had realized something of this in India, and Montcalm had succeeded with the Hurons in Canada. And there were many other instances of a tactful collaboration between French and natives: and indeed these were throughout a disturbing element when one tried to explain French native policy only in terms of *refoulement* and *cantonnement*. In the Second Empire this was still more noticeable. There were the reforms of Paul Bert (1886) and de Lanessan (1891–1893) in Tonkin, of Paul Cambon (1881–1886) in his organization of Tunisia, of Galliéni in Madagascar (perhaps the most successful of all), and, at a later stage, of Lyautey in Morocco. In particular, France was stirred in the early nineties, and before the popularity of de Lanessan or the triumph of Galliéni, by the peaceful missions of Binger and Monteil in Central Africa, the more so because the tradition of decades had been that only brusque military action could avail in those regions. These outstanding colonials, by acting in a non-military direction, and by stressing development on native lines just at this auspicious moment, greatly aided the emergence of the new theory and, in fact, removed it from the world of theory and correlated it with practical conditions from the outset.

Thus, the theory in its modern form evolved simultaneously in colonial practice and colonial philosophy. On the theoretical side, “*association*,” deriving a general support from Fourier, was really implicit in Gustave Le Bon’s attitude at the 1889 Colonial Congress, and explicit in the writings of Jules Harmand. And it was to Harmand that the work of popularization was due. Harmand (1845–1921), having spent a lifetime of service in the Orient, was by no means a mere theorist. He had accompanied Garnier’s first expedition to Tonkin in 1873, had made five difficult journeys in Indo-China, and had then become in succession the French Commissary-General of Tonkin (1883–5), Consul-General at Calcutta, and Minister-Plenipotentiary at Tokio (1894–1907), the variety of his experience making him an authority on comparative colonial policy.<sup>24</sup> His experience was particularly varied as regards the impact between the traditional civilization of the Orient and the forces of the Occident: and indeed, it was on the disintegrating features of this contact that his theory was built. At the Conference of 1889 he insisted on the need of developing from the past, and on considering the Annamites,

<sup>24</sup> *L’Afrique Française*, Feb. 1921, p. 48.

not as so many million featureless individuals, but as a nation with all its accumulated heritage of manners and institutions and even "its relative superiority," in order "to make of it to some degree the companion of our future and our *associate*." The point was re-emphasized in his important introduction to the translation of Strachey's *India* in 1891,<sup>25</sup> especial insistence being laid on the fact that development had to be continuous evolution and not any disastrous breach with the native's past, the more so because, with the tenacity of Oriental civilization, such an enforced breach was futile and could not obliterate the traditions of the past. Harmand expressed the theory in a final form in his treatise, *Domination et Colonisation* (1910), which remains perhaps the best analytic piece of colonial theory in France, and which placed the "association" principle on unassailable foundations.

Here the matter rested until after the war, when there was a great revival in colonial theory, almost entirely along the principle of natives developing according to the needs of their *milieu* and on the foundation of their institutions. Louis Vignon, the veteran authority of the *École Coloniale*, and an erstwhile assimilator, had rescinded his former views, and, in a strikingly comprehensive *Programme de Politique Coloniale* (1919), summed up the experience of the past and the crystallization of future policy along these lines. Sir Frederick Lugard and von der Kecken performed similar services for English and Belgian Africa<sup>26</sup>; and, at the 1921 meeting of the International Colonial Institute, Charles van Vollenhoven gathered together the various trends,<sup>27</sup> and showed how clearly the policy of *association* or its slightly modified variant, the protectorate policy, was in the ascendant in the realm of native administration. Practically no French theorist of note stood outside the new policy: the psychological school of Delafosse and the administrative materialists, whose views Girault expounds, alike favoured this compromise; and by 1919, *association* was as predominant as assimilation had been in 1889. Galliéni and Lyautey set the methods, and theory was even outstripping them. "Each in his own civilization" was the slogan, and the celebrated speech of Waldeck-Rousseau to the French Parliament in June, 1901, where the catchword had first been used and these principles enunciated, was now the gospel of the reformers.<sup>28</sup>

The triumph of the theory, moreover, was aided by the new emphasis on the moral aspects of native administration,—a view-point explained by

<sup>25</sup> Strachey, *L'Inde* (1891), p. xiv.

<sup>26</sup> In *The Dual Mandate in British West Africa* (1923), and *Les Sociétés Bantoues du Congo Belge et les Problèmes de la Politique Indigène* (1920), p. 121, respectively.

<sup>27</sup> *Institut Colonial International. Compte Rendu*, 1921 session, p. 369 et seq.

<sup>28</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 15/6/01; compare Delafosse in *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1921, p. 149.

the awakening of interest in the French colonies after they had so conspicuously rallied to France in the war-years. When this active participation in men and money and products actually brought the French Empire home to the Frenchmen of the motherland, a new impetus towards understanding was naturally provided, and the last vestiges of that theory which had looked on natives as raw material either for industry or for experiments in cultural adaptation vanished. The change was the more evident because, ever since 1906, there had been a gradual drift in this direction. The events of the war thus made explicit vague conceptions which were already implicit in the French group-mind, and served indisputably to clinch the contentions which had been gradually pressing to the fore. Apart from the remarkable ideas of Marshal Randon (that quaint mixture of military martinet and social reformer who had governed Algeria in the fifties) and the letters of Napoleon III anent an Arab Kingdom, and the transient awakening of interest about the time of the expansion of 1890, there was really no constructive or permanent interest in native problems until Clemenceau's first Ministry (1906-1909).<sup>29</sup> To secure an adequate representation of the native view-point, he arranged for an elected native-assessor in the Algerian Council-General and aided native interests: and soon a survey was made of all spheres of native policy. The Colonial Congress of 1906 had commenced such a survey, and similar councils of investigation, all publishing exhaustive reports, were held for the main groups of colonies,—for the Old Colonies in 1907, for North Africa in 1909, and for Madagascar in 1910. The question of native military service had become an actual issue in the same years (1907-1912),<sup>30</sup> and naturally touched the native problem from a variety of angles, social and economic as well as purely military: and by 1914 the question of natives taking part in elections was mooted as a general principle and decided in the affirmative.<sup>31</sup> France was thus attacking the native problem comprehensively, for it was realized that neither repression nor drift was adequate under the new conditions.

By this time the approach was clearly a dual one. On the one hand, France simply could not afford to alienate the natives in her new Empire, as she had done the Algerians: if she did so, the very maintenance of the Empire would be extremely problematical. Native collaboration was the only way out of the difficulty, especially because the pressure of depopulation in France made impossible any large extension of the *personnel* employed in the colonies. The demographical position of

<sup>29</sup> V. Piquet, *Les Réformes en Algérie et le Statut des Indigènes* (1919), p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 20, 22/2/10; 8/4/11.

<sup>31</sup> E.g., in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 10/2/14.

France and the area of the colonies made native co-operation absolutely inevitable: and co-operation did not mean a negative freedom from insurrection, for, under the conditions, the passive hostility of the Indo-Chinese was quite as detrimental as armed revolt would have been: it was a positive collaboration, both of act and of spirit, that was needed. Already in 1901, Le Myre de Vilers, the victor of Madagascar, had said, in a colonial-budget report, that "colonial defence is far more a matter of administration and of native policy than a military question," and henceforth this view-point was France's guiding star. On the winning-over of the natives depended the fate of the Empire.

That was the one set of facts: on the other hand, there was a trend in France which would have meant advance on these lines, even had the issue not been forced at the moment, for, since the Congo atrocities of 1905, and especially since the Toqué-Gaud *cause célèbre* in Brazzaville, a wave of humanitarianism had been sweeping over France like an exotic cult. "The reigning superstition," wrote a colonial critic in 1905, "is humanitarianism,—a strange disease engendered by the false idealism of 1789, upheld by literary and political Romanticism, caressed by the pseudo-liberalism of the Lafittes and the Royer-Collards, and recently aggravated by the revival of the Huguenot spirit."<sup>32</sup> It was the dilettante cult of the day, and was supported by the interest in native mentality and in the mysteries of the African bush and Asiatic tradition,—an interest that may almost be described as a sensory search for the exotic. There was a curious blend of the dilettante and the philanthropic,—of the sickened revolt against the Congo atrocities revealed by the last de Brazza mission, and of the interest in Flandin's colonial romances and Delafosse's analysis of the conflict of white and native mentalities. But, whatever its origin and whatever its constitution, this interest served definitely practical purposes in focusing attention on native problems in the decade before 1914, the more so because, in practically every other field, this was a period of colonial disillusion and lethargy and drift.

Thus, when the war came, the French frame of mind was suitably attuned to the reception of the new influences: it was already fertilized ground into which the seed, the rallying of the natives to France, was planted; and the triumph of *association* and *protectorate* was the harvest. Before the war, according to Lucien Hubert, a budget-reporter of the colonies, the ordinary Frenchman's ideas of the colonies came from *Paul et Virginie*, Uncle Tom, and Pierre Loti,<sup>33</sup>—together with the

<sup>32</sup> C. Regismanset, *Questions Coloniales: 1900-1912*, p. 52.

<sup>33</sup> Compare Archimbaud's budget-speech of 1926, in *Journal Officiel*, Dep 2/12/26, or Deps., docts. parl., 1926, No. 3401.

Gauguin idea that the colonies were easily-equipped laboratories for the last refinements of sensual experience, and to this, curiously enough, was added a vague undercurrent of humanitarianism. But the war changed all this unreality, and made the colonial question a national one. "Colonial incorporation" was now the phrase of the day, and to no phase did this apply more than to native policy: improvised governmental empiricism and the equally unconstructive economic exploitation were now both discarded for a continuous constructive policy. How otherwise could it be, when the French had felt a nascent humanitarianism throughout the previous decade, and when they were already speaking of depriving Germany of her possessions for "Colonial unworthiness" (the very phrase implying a certain code of colonial morality to deviate from which was moral failure), and when they had actually seen the march of the colonial natives through France? The Frenchmen now realized the immensity and the scope and the *personal* nature of colonial problems, when they saw colonials of all hues actually living in France,—Arabs and Berbers of the north, Ouloufs and Toucouleurs and Moors and Semitic Peuhls of the west, scarred Bambaras and desert Djermas and Baribas and Gouros of the south, and others from the isolated possessions the world over. Had not the nervous Somalis helped to hold Douamont, and had not the saffron Annamites and the chocolate Kanakas and the tawny Tahitians of the South Seas, and the Hovas and Betsileos and Sakalavas and even the Tanala forest-hunters of Madagascar all come to France? What years of discussion had been unable to effect, the war had done in a few months, and in an impressively spectacular manner such as would appeal to the French temperament.

The native policy of France had received a new meaning, a newer and more immediate significance, and a new orientation as regards its place in general policy. The result was the adoption of the policy of *association*. At present, therefore, assimilation has been completely discarded, and the emphasis is on a limited association, to the extent to which this can afford reciprocal advantages. But there are two clearly held conceptions in this matter. While as much emphasis as possible is laid on native institutions and on development along lines compatible with the native past, it is understood that a reasonable reform is the primary *desideratum*, and that in no case can *association* be construed as an idle *laissez-faire* or a bolstering-up of effete and useless institutions. And, secondly, it is equally clear that the ban on assimilation and the adoption of *association* by no means imply any large degree of devolution. French native policy remains as centripetal as ever, and, in this field as in others, it is only the method that has changed. What Sarraut has called "a more or less hidden abdication of our sovereignty" has

never been considered, either as the present or future need of the native.

But, on the other hand, there are two positive features of the new native policy, the potentialities of which allow an unlimited progress. First is the conviction that "each race has a civilization of its own, derived from the *milieu* in which it has evolved, from its traditions, and from its customs,"<sup>34</sup> and that such a civilization is a plastic and malleable one, capable of adaptation to changing circumstances, and containing within itself the possibility of progressive change. With this goes the kindred conception that there is no such thing as an intrinsically and innately inferior native race. To the French theorist, every race is capable of progress, because there is no immutable gradation from the Nordic down to the cannibal of New Caledonia or the Congo pygmies. France admits, not a permanent inferiority, but only that some races are behind others. She sees only retarded evolution as the explanation of cannibalism in the Marquesas or the degraded social customs of the natives of Laos, and denies any eternal inferiority of even those abysmal savages. But this recognition no longer, as it did in the past, serves as an excuse for an attempted realization of immediate equality: rather does it tend to make present political and administrative equality the more illogical. Different conditions necessitate different measures. "Hence we energetically reject the blind adaptation to all our colonial possessions of the social forms and political *milieu* to which we ourselves have been accustomed."<sup>35</sup> The very concept of ultimate equality, involving as it does the recognition of present inequalities, makes this outlook necessary, for otherwise there would be a ban on all that separates the neolithic savage from the twentieth-century Frenchman.

Therefore, while clearly opposing the traditionally aloof attitude of the English towards native races (even in their indirect rule), and while emphasizing "the human value" of native policy, the French insist on varying methods, proportioned to the degree of backwardness of the tribe concerned. This in no wise denies or even postpones the concession of basic equality, but simply shows that the absence of colour feeling in France and the concession of the intrinsic equality of all races were tempered by practical considerations. Thus it is that French statesmen speak in the same speech of absolute native equality, and yet reject all schemes of naturalization *en masse* and all systems of self-government or universal suffrage on European models. But the two aspects are complementary rather than opposed, and both are logical developments of the premises, whereas the assimilation of former days was

<sup>34</sup> O. Meynier, *L'Afrique Noire* (1911), p. 181.

<sup>35</sup> A. Sarraut (1923), *op. cit.*, p. 100.

only a one-sided argument, neglecting certain vital factors of the situation. It is the recognition of present differences and ultimate equality, although under different conditions, that gives a meaning to the French idea of the association or collaboration of races, and that clearly distinguishes this policy from assimilation or identity.

There theory rests at present, with a stress both on native development and outside reforms, the degree of association being a varying one according to the local conditions of each case. But, while there is equality, it is a potential rather than an actual equality, and, even then, an equality in difference. No attempted measures of identification are contemplated either for the immediate or the remote future. France has rejected the ideas both of group naturalization and group political privileges. Nothing is to be merely automatic (the naturalization of the Algerians in 1919 does not disprove this, as it was a case *sui generis*, engendered by war-psychology): especially deserving individuals may be naturalized, on the ground of their own worthiness, but that is all. So too, while a greater degree of administrative or financial autonomy is contemplated for the colonies under the Sarraut scheme, there is no general recognition of unlimited native representation in the colonies, other than on the grounds of the individual worthiness of the native group in question. For individual natives and for native groups, such privileges are specific and not general. In a word, association on the French model implies, and leads to, neither autonomy nor identity, but to a working compromise or collaboration within one whole.<sup>36</sup>

In this connection there is a difference of opinion between those who advocate the older "association," and those who plead for the newer "protectorate" idea; and, although the difference in theory seems infinitesimal, and although both policies are clearly based on the same general principles and seek the same goal, the distinction has important consequences in practice, and so cannot be neglected. It has really arisen from two misconceptions. There are those who think that *association* means the collaboration of two equals, and is thus perhaps a policy of the future, but that in the interim there has to be a workable compromise, based on a "Protectorate,"—that is, on the beneficent tutelage of a more advanced race over a backward one evolving in the sense of its own past. But, as has been pointed out, the very basis of *association*, rightly interpreted, is the co-partnership of races at various levels of development, and a joint evolution, not in absolute equality, but in such a degree of equality as the situation seems to warrant.

On the other hand, there are those who say that, by emphasizing the tutelage aspect, *association* is simply disguised assimilation,—a trick

<sup>36</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 15/6/01 (Waldeck-Rousseau), 5/12/91 (Burdeau).

of the assimilators to make their theory conform to the times. Louis Vignon, for instance, throws the weight of his authority behind this contention, and sees both too much Europeanization and too much reciprocity in *association*.<sup>37</sup> He holds that it is based on an unworkable link and on a permeation by each side of certain phases of the civilization of the other,—an impractical conception, in fact. Therefore, he urges an extension of the “protectorate” policy that France has followed in Tunisia, Morocco and West Africa. But, in actual practice, his policy comes to what has been defined above as *association*, although he would prefer to see the contact of races rather in the nature of segregation. His aim, however, that of anti-assimilation, is frankly *association*. “Let us at once renounce dreams and ideological views and *the exportation of grand principles*, and let us pretend to be nothing more than tutors or educators to our subjects, presiding over an evolution conformable to natural laws.” By this definition of policy, and by the emphasis on a tutoring or presiding relationship with the natives, he really throws himself into the camp of the associationists, and to quarrel over such matters is really sacrificing policy to hair-splitting differences.

But there is a difference in objective between *association* and “protectorate,”<sup>38</sup> for, while both stress advance on native lines, the first allows a varying part to be played by both Europeans and natives, while the latter definitely cedes priority to the natives, and is more negative than the former. *Association* stresses a compulsory advance suitable to native mentality and to the existing situation, but still imposed by Europeans; whereas a “protectorate” implies development by the natives, with Europeans supervising to a lesser degree, and not interfering unless given practices are clearly anti-social. Both stress native agents and native mentality, but the one approaches from the European angle, the other from the native. One is in essence centripetal, the other the opposite. But, after all, in practice, the difference is little, because both have the common ground of opposing assimilation and considering native needs: both really mean the same thing at present, and it is only the remote future that will be influenced by their slightly varied objectives and principles. If there is not absolute identity between them, the essential accord is given by their common reaction from preceding policies.

French native policy has thus crystallized in the direction of *association* or a “protectorate” policy, tendencies assisted by the “human” spirit in that policy, and by a certain curious sympathy with the native soul,—at least for the negroes, if not so noticeably for the Mohammedans.

<sup>37</sup> Vignon (1919), *op. cit.*, p. 113 *et seq.*

<sup>38</sup> A. de Pourvoirville, *L'Asie Française* (1911), pp. 134-135.

And, since the war, this trend has clearly been reinforced by the marked negrophile reaction in Paris, noticeable alike in the drama and literature and music, and in a general reawakening of the esoteric psychology of the years after 1905. "*L'âme nègre*" is the idea, and, dilettante though the concept is, it undoubtedly influences thought on colonial questions.

But, with this, certain opposite tendencies survive, and "the hand of iron" keeps emerging from "the velvet glove," in Syria and Morocco and the Ivory Coast and New Caledonia, for instance. Thus there is often a frank breaking of native organizations and also a constantly recurring eddy of assimilation. The move to enfranchise certain classes of Algerians in 1919, the council-scheme in Tunisia in 1922, and the political developments in Indo-China since 1923, for instance, all bear testimony to this substratum of influence, this curious survival of a discredited theory.

Out of all these tendencies emerges a native policy which, while predominantly one of *association*, is not in all ways clear-cut and well-defined: the perspective is at times a trifle blurred, as with the treatment of the Algerians; and, though France is aided by a certain ease of understanding primitive life and a partial spirit of tolerance and qualities of orderliness, she is hampered by the conflicting appeal of various theories and the pedantry and power of bureaucrats and jurists. French native policy, therefore, remains at basis a tendency rather than an exclusive theory; although, since 1914, it has been far clearer and more unified and more definitely "native" than it had been heretofore. France for the first time had a native policy in any wise based on the needs of the situation and genuinely determined by native interests; and, even if there were many cross-currents of opinion, this in itself was a great advance—more so than "indirect rule" with the English, because of the greater contrast with what had gone before. France now has a policy which holds, in the main, and which may be defined, as Harmand summed it up in 1910, as "founded on the functional independence of the protected country and the conquering State, and on a respect for the diversity of native customs."<sup>39</sup> And exactly what this means in the way of advance may be seen from a contrast with the absurd theories of assimilation propounded by the Colonial Congress of 1889 and the repression of natives during the period of militaristic expansion after 1894, and during the drift in colonial policy between 1906 and 1914. It is not the all-sufficiency of the *association* policy in itself that counts, nor the fact that it finds numerous exceptions in practice: but it is the obvious advance on preceding policies and the possibilities contained within the new one. The possibilities may be for good or for evil, and may result in more of

<sup>39</sup> Harmand (1910), p. 22; *L'Afrique Française*, July, 1923, p. 252.

that repression that was evident in the Congo, or that desultory and confused alternation of reform and *refoulement* which Algeria has known : but it is something new in French colonial policy that the potentialities for good are present, and not only present but given a place of priority, alike by theorists and statesmen and the men in the field.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CENTRAL ORGANIZATION

#### I. The Ministry of the Colonies

THE most obvious central organization in the French colonial system is naturally the Ministry of the Colonies, and nothing better reflects the haphazard growth of that system than the history and present position of the Ministry. Until thirty years ago, there was no such Ministry, and, even to-day, a fifth of the French colonial population do not come under it, and its general position is by no means clear. The *bureaux* or permanent departments are more powerful than in any other country, the degree of bureaucratic control being a byword, yet three of the major colonies are completely outside their influence. That is, the Ministry is, outside of Parliament, the only body determining colonial policy, for France has none of the subsidiary offices and commissions that England has in this connection. But, on the other hand, it is a Ministry of the Colonies only in name, and, to obtain a general view of colonial policy, or even of everyday colonial happenings, the observer must go to three distinct Ministries. The actual administration of three parts of the colonial Empire is under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior,—not a vague right of determining and co-ordinating general policy, but administration in its narrowest sense. Such a position is, of course, an accident of history and a concession to the immobility of French officialdom rather than a consciously devised plan: nevertheless, it exerts its influence on French colonization,—and that influence cannot by any stretch of the imagination be termed good.

The Ministry of Colonies itself has had a most chequered history in France. The *ancien régime* did not know any “central administration” of the colonies in the sense of rule by *bureaux* in Paris. Richelieu had set up a *Grand Maître* to supervise colonial and commercial matters, but the office was short-lived, and from 1669 to the Revolution, colonial affairs were controlled by the Naval Ministry. Simplest ideas have always characterized French colonial conceptions, and this was perhaps the first of the long chain,—that, inasmuch as the colonies were overseas, it was but seemly that they should be attached to other overseas matters,—

that is, to the department dealing with sea-communications. Save for a breach from 1858 to 1860, when Napoleon III created a Ministry of the Colonies, this connection went on until Gambetta's Ministry of 1880, and led to a point of view that still colours much of French colonial activity. The association could be easily understood. All settlement was at that time in the coastal stage, and both the life of the colonies and communication with France depended on the Navy. Moreover, each colony, in so far as it was a settled *enclave* in a native country, came to be regarded as an isolated unit of France somewhat on a par with a French vessel at sea. Its preservation under the conditions was supposed to depend upon the maintenance of its *morale*, and everything was subordinated to the securing of discipline. Colonial methods were those that came naturally to the naval officers of last century, colonial officials were simply naval officers seconded for special service. It could almost be said that the colonies themselves were rather raw material for new strategic combinations than anything else. The position was that which pertained in Australia up to 1810, when naval martinets administered the colony as if it had been a gaol. But this method, although it did not last long in the British colonies, went on in France, almost unquestioned, until 1881.<sup>1</sup>

About that time a certain incongruity began to be felt about the situation. The nature of colonization in itself was changing. It was fitting enough to have the Navy control the colonies when they were either scattered islands or isolated factories on the African coast; but, when settlement penetrated inland, as it did during the scramble for Africa in the eighties of last century, and when the group of trading-posts developed into a society, this position no longer held. The colonial problem was emerging in its modern sense. The French had obtained Indo-China, and the problem there was economic rather than military. Indeed, it was the economic aspect that had come to dominate the situation everywhere. Ferry was "commercializing" colonization, and the colonies were looked upon as potential markets,—to be developed, now that the initial conquest was achieved. It was felt that the Navy could acquire the colonies for France but could not develop them, once they had been secured. It was recognized that colonization was a technical task and that overseas ventures were far more than a naval side-line. The colonies themselves, by the rapidity of their development, gave point to these arguments of Gambetta and Ferry, and, on all sides, there was an agreement that France had either to give up the colonial struggle or view it seriously. Ferry's fight decided that France should go on in the new direction: therefore Gambetta, in the zeal of his Grand Ministry

<sup>1</sup> Girault (1922), 2.1.203-205.

of 1881, entrusted the colonies to a Havre shipowner, Felix Faure, and called him an Under-Secretary of State.

The next thirteen years saw many experiments in colonial control. The colonial organization had what might be termed growing-pains, and was endeavouring to accommodate itself both to the changing position of the colonies and to the fluctuations of metropolitan opinion. France in these years was conquering an Empire, but did not know how to deal with it. She could not dispense with the Under-Secretary, yet did not know what to do with him and his department. Gambetta attached him to the Ministry of Commerce,—a concession to Ferry's interpretation of colonization as an economic function. But his successors were dubious on this point, and, when the Grand Ministry collapsed of its very grandeur, the colonies were handed over to a Director, Paul Dislère, the authority on colonial jurisprudence. This experiment scarcely survived the year (1882–1883), and then the Under-Secretariat was revived, but this time attached to the Navy.<sup>2</sup> It was a period of experimentation by a frankly empirical process: nobody pretended to know what was best, so the various alternatives were tried in succession. From 1886 onwards, however, the Under-Secretariat became permanently established, although it was by no means clear just where it fitted into the official edifice. Feeling seemed to indicate that it should be under both Ministries, but the question of divided responsibility forbade any practical application of this idea. All through the eighties there was vacillation on this question, and it was not until Eugene Etienne's memorable terms of office (1887–1888, 1889–1892) that any finality was reached. Etienne took a bold stand and declared that the direction of the colonies, to be effective, should have two distinct features. It was to be independent, and its functions were to be primarily economic.<sup>3</sup> He thus fought the old naval tradition tooth and nail, declaring that the former association, as applied to the conditions of the New Africa, could only mean stagnation.

The colonial service, therefore, gradually became independent. The Under-Secretary's functions were enlarged by the cession of certain affairs from the Naval Ministry, and he acquired the power of signing decrees independently of the Minister of Commerce, even after his department was again attached to that Ministry in 1889. With this definition the administration of the colonies was almost independent. Indeed, the last few Under-Secretaries were Ministers in everything but name, and, as such, Etienne in particular, left the impress of their personalities on

<sup>2</sup> For a good history see Regismanset (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 34 *et seq.*, or E. Petit, *Organisation des Colonies françaises* (1894), Vol. I, p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 2/12/91.

colonial organization. The transformation of the French colonial Empire at this date allowed of no other solution, and it was only the law of the constitution that forbade a complete independence. The colonies were developing so rapidly that they were forcing recognition for themselves and for the body that dealt with their affairs : so that the actual inception of a Ministry of the Colonies was due quite as much to the facts of colonial growth as to the vigorous personality of Eugene Etienne. When both of these forces came into operation simultaneously, the actual achievement was only a matter of time.

By 1894 the goal was obvious. The new international importance of Africa had made colonization an important part of any nation's life. Colonies had become assets instead of costly drolleries of great nations. They were important diplomatically ; their absence was taken to mean weakness ; and they were seen to have a distinct economic value, especially when words like rubber and oil and cotton came to assume a new meaning in world economics. That is, the prestige of the colonies was becoming enhanced. At the same time, their management was becoming more and more specialized. This meant that colonial questions could no longer be relegated to any Minister who would take them and sign the necessary decrees. The position had changed, and could no longer be adequately met by an irresponsible Under-Secretary and a Minister whose primary work lay in some other field. There had to be a Minister who could organize a department of specialists and be responsible for them in Parliament, especially when world-peace came to depend on such matters as the Ubangui-Nile basin. Spain, Holland, and Great Britain already had such a Ministry, and France had a more important empire than two of these. Lastly, just at this moment, the leading French possessions (Indo-China, West Africa, the Congo, and Madagascar) were all demanding permanent organization. A law of March 20, 1894, therefore set up a Ministry of the Colonies.<sup>4</sup>

A curious detail may be noticed in connection with this act. Up to that time a simple Presidential decree had been deemed sufficient for the institution of any new Ministry. Indeed, this was the first occasion in French history when a Ministry had been created by a law. The reason for the unusual procedure in this instance was said to be the novel nature of the issue and the many interpretations that could be given to the new step. Moreover, opinion was so divided that the Cabinet would not move without the consent of Parliament. Previous proposals with this idea in view had been rejected in 1887 and 1892,<sup>5</sup> and there was considerable opposition to the move, both on the part of those who favoured and those

<sup>4</sup> *Journal Officiel*, 21/3/94. For report on organization see *Journal Officiel*, 5/5/94.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 11/3/92.

who opposed the colonial cause. The latter were naturally arrayed in full force against any proposition that seemed to confer a new dignity on the colonies, and many moderates opposed the creation of a new Ministry on principle, lest it should complicate an already intricate administrative machinery. Some, too, thought that the colonies were not sufficiently important for this new status, or that, even if they were, the institution of a Ministry would make control more minute and ponderous. Curiously enough, the most strenuous opposition came from the colonial representatives themselves. They saw in the proposal a measure of centralization, an undue emphasis on Paris, and thus an attack on the growing autonomy of the colonies.

But, over and against this more or less sectional opposition, stood the reasons in favour of a Ministry. The colonies had their new importance, deny it who would: the economic nature of their problems demanded specialists: their very size made a separate control absolutely necessary: other Powers under similar circumstances had Colonial Offices: and, perhaps the most cogent argument of all, the existing machinery had broken down. The Ministry in 1892 had shelved the issue on the ground that it was not of immediate urgency: moreover, they reasoned, looking facts in the face, there was already a Ministry in fact, if not in name. But, at this juncture, the old weakness of irresponsibility again cropped up. It had been pointed out by jurists that the Under-Secretary for the Colonies had power without responsibility, and that the Minister to whom he was attached for the time being, whether of the Navy or Commerce, could not be held responsible for acts over which he had no effective control. The Under-Secretary was in reality a floating *enclave* in the administrative world, immune from the customary check of responsibility to Parliament for misdeed or ill-advised policy. And this was not a mere theoretical possibility: certain acts of the Council of State at that moment showed that it was a pressing practical question.<sup>6</sup> The Council refused to ratify certain acts of Under-Secretary Lebon, who at once resigned and left the colonies without any central administration at all. The Council repeated the old quip about power without responsibility, Lebon retorted that under the conditions he had neither power nor responsibility. An issue was thus forced, and the Casimir-Perier Ministry reintroduced the law creating a Ministry of the Colonies, this time placing it in the category of urgent legislation.

It passed both Houses in three days, the Senate having a special *séance* on Monday, March 19, 1894, to expedite its passage.<sup>7</sup> The upper House was not as much in its favour as the Deputies had been,

<sup>6</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Senate, 21/6/92 (Trarieux interpellation).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Depts., 18/3/94, Senate, 20/3/94. Senate, 14/5/93 (Delcassé).

because there the colonial representatives were in greater force, and many of the Senators favoured the conservative policy of leaving the colonies with the Navy. But the choice before them was rather a different one. As interpreted to them, it was not so much a choice between a separate Ministry and a department attached to the Navy, as a vote on colonial policy as such. If the Senate had rejected the proposal, that would have been equivalent to abandoning the colonial conquests of the previous decade, because it was realized that the existing machinery was incapable of organizing the new colonies; whereas, on the other hand, their immediate endorsement of the project meant the maintenance and extension of the forward policy overseas. This was the most significant vote on colonial policy since the proposal to retain Tonkin in 1885, and France for the second time, this time decisively, chose for the colonies. The law of March 20, 1894, was thus far more than the consummation of an administrative development that had been taking place since 1881: it was the confirmation of the New Empire, and the decision to develop that empire to the utmost.

No sooner was this victory achieved, however, than other problems arose. There was now a Ministry of the Colonies,—a somewhat unsought Ministry, it is true, but still a Ministry of full status: but the question was,—over what regions had the Minister any power? Algeria clearly stood outside his ken, because, if it was not France, it was still not a colony. Its hundred thousand French settlers made it a prolongation of France,—a Corsica rather than a West Africa. So that it remained under the Ministry of the Interior,—a decision that was taken to confirm the privileged status of Algeria and that was practically unquestioned. Then arose the question of the protectorates. France clearly did not own these lands, and they were in some degree distinct States. Their problems could fairly be called more than national and yet less than international, they were both colonial and diplomatic. Therefore, the protectorates were handed over to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>8</sup> Tunisia and later Morocco were thus disposed of, and there arose the anomalous position of having Africa Minor divided into three portions and distributed amongst two Ministries, neither of them the Ministry of the Colonies! To be logical, Annam and Tonkin, also being protectorates, should have gone to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but these were so much incorporated in Indo-China as a whole and Cochinchina was so obviously a completely French possession that a decree of 1887 took them from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and handed them over to the Under-Secretary for the Colonies. This was obviously

<sup>8</sup> See explanation in Mérygnac, *Traité de Droit Public International* (1905), Vol. I, p. 211.

anomalous, and so too was the placing of the mandated territories (Togo and Cameroon) under the Minister of the Colonies, because these were even more international in character than the protectorates. The position really amounts to a grouping under the Minister of the Colonies of all the overseas possessions except the North African seaboard. Yet the logical solution of a division into two clear groups is rejected, because of the failure to unite Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia under one control.

It is in this latter direction that criticism has been tending for some time. There is practically no move to attach the three North African States to the colonial Ministry, nor has there ever been one.<sup>9</sup> They stand apart from the rest of the French Empire, from which they are differentiated by their geographical position and the nature of their problems. The French argue that they are Mediterranean rather than African ("it should never be forgotten," says Girault, "that Africa Minor belongs much more to the Mediterranean world than to the African"). But, while there is some point to this argument, it would seem to be over-stressed. It is argued, too, that France's Moslem problem is concentrated in these regions, but this neglects the Islamised negroes of Central Africa. Even admitting the force of the contention that the Barbary States constitute a solid *bloc* apart from the other colonies, however, the question arises as to why they are not united under a single department. If they are separated from the rest, because of their distinctness and the similarity of their problems, why are they divided amongst themselves? The argument that they were acquired at different times and that one is a possession and two only protectorates loses its point, because of opposing practices elsewhere,—in Indo-China, for example. And the middle cannot in the main have problems distinct from the two extremities. Indeed, the very arguments that justify the separation of North Africa from the rest of the colonies condemn the present division under two Ministries. They are kept apart from the rest of the Empire because of peculiar local interests: the existence of those interests equally demands a single control—if not the "Ministry of North Africa" that is so much sought after, at least a single Under-Secretariat.<sup>10</sup> Guizot had foreseen this development, Ferry hoped for it, and the organic reformers of the conference-period around 1905 demanded it in no uncertain terms. For a time, the issue was obscured by Messimy's insistence on "a Ministry of Africa and the Colonies" (a title that is as cumbrous as it is a misnomer),<sup>11</sup> but, after the acquisition

<sup>9</sup> See, however, Perreau-Pradier in *Colonies et Marine*, May 31, 1920, p. 265.

<sup>10</sup> Girault, "Le ministère de l'Afrique du Nord," in *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, Jan. 1918.

<sup>11</sup> Messimy in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 25/3/14; compare Besson in *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, Dec. 1917.

of Morocco, opinion veered back to the lesser idea of a "North African Ministry." Strengthened during the war-years, this trend is at present in the ascendant. According to *L'Afrique Française*, the Conservative organ of the colonial party, the direction of future changes is fairly certain.<sup>12</sup> There will be a kind of department for North Africa, and special codes of law will apply there. The three provinces will be united for some purposes, something on the model of the Union of South Africa, but each will preserve its individuality. There will thus be a logical division within the French Empire. The three Mauretaniae will be grouped together, as every argument urges, and over against them, will be the overseas colonies proper.<sup>13</sup>

Whether this North African department will be under the Minister of Colonies or either of the two Ministries at present concerned, or whether it will be a new Ministry in itself, depends on the vagaries of French politics. It would appear, however, that the best solution would be to raise the prestige of the Minister of the Colonies and place him over two co-equal departments,—one dealing with Africa Minor, the other with the remaining colonies. This is the solution Great Britain has adopted for a somewhat similar difficulty. The Minister of the Colonies supervises both the Dominions and the Crown Colonies, though there are separate departments for each.

But the stumbling-blocks to unity in the French case are the opposition of the French residents in Algeria and the peculiar status of Tunisia and Morocco. The French in Algeria value their special position and resent any attempt to connect them with the other colonies,—the black or yellow regions of France. Rejoicing in their special status, they interpret any changes as retrogression to a stage which they have long left. On the other hand, the duplication and conflicting policies involved in the division between two unconnected Ministries and in the separation from other colonial matters are so obvious that such sectional opposition as that of the French Algerians should count for little. The trouble is not that the faults of the present situation are unrecognized, not that the solution is obscure, but solely that the constant ebb and flow amongst the many parties in French politics daunts any party from tackling this thorny question. A solution, far from helping the party concerned, would provide just such an issue as would at once rally all of its opponents. Colonial organization has suffered for decades, because it provides an ideal *casus belli* in Parliament. All stand to lose by touching it, and none

<sup>12</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, March, 1922, p. 132.

<sup>13</sup> Pamphlets by F. Bernard, *L'Unification de l'Afrique du Nord* (1919), or article by Ordinaire, "Constitutions Africaines," in *Colonies et Marine*, March-April, 1920, p. 176 *et seq.*

to gain ; and heretofore no party or *bloc* has seen fit to interfere. The matter is urgent but not vital : the position is admittedly bad, but still the colonies survive ! A continued drift is the easiest way out of the dilemma, and so the years pass. A Messimy or a Viollette may stir up the embers from time to time, a Hubert may cause interpellations on colonial matters, but such individuals pass to some administrative post, and the Senate or Deputies thankfully let the matter drop. Experts like Regismanset or Girault draw up elaborate schemes, only for them to be tabled or relegated to the archives : and still officials in the Ministries of the Colonies, the Interior, and Foreign Affairs, investigate precisely similar problems. Even Sarraut, root-and-branch reformer though he was, could do no more than point in general terms to the abstract desirability of a change, and his very lack of detailed proposals seemed to damn the project as not immediately important. “*Ça n'est pas admirable,*” runs the French argument, “*mais ça va !*” The present arrangement works, and it might be worse. Moreover, why bother about rearranging the French Empire in a perfectly logical manner ? If that were the criterion, practically the whole of the colonial structure would have to be torn down ! The question is thus left to colonial conferences and legal periodicals, and every one else is pleased that it is not a matter of politics. If Rousseau represented one side of French life, so did Tartarin, or, better still, Bernard Zimmer's Bava ! And did not the Senate's attitude towards the *mise en valeur* project in 1919 or the Syrian question in 1920 exactly reflect these varied influences ?

As a result of this confusion, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia remain outside the scope of the Colonial Minister. They are not termed colonies, they do not usually come within colonial statistics, Sarraut did not include them in his scheme for a *mise en valeur* of the Empire. A colonial area twice as large as France and containing more than a fifth of the French overseas subjects is completely separated from colonial control. How France collects colonial statistics under these conditions, or how a Moslem policy is decided upon, or a colonial budget drawn up is not clear : but certainly not in the most expeditious manner.

Those services which still remain under the Minister of Colonies have an elaborate organization. As usual, the past has known much variation, because two diametrically opposed systems were possible. Services could be divided either geographically or according to their nature. At first, for example, in the Ministerial organization of May, 1896, the former principle was accepted, and the Ministry was divided into departments, each of which dealt with all the problems of a given colony. But general principles could not be managed in this fashion, nor could a uniformity of policy be secured. Details tended to triumph over principles, and

the anticipated advantage of having the affairs, say, of Madagascar, dealt with by experts who really knew Madagascar, did not eventuate. The system, instead of meaning localized knowledge, meant a narrow parochialism. This flaw became the more obvious when the immensity of the colonial problem made a uniformity of policy the more necessary. Strategy had become more important than tactics, and principles than details.

The new organization, that achieved by the Law of Finances in July, 1920,<sup>14</sup> therefore adopted the second principle as the basis of future organization. Hereafter, colonial matters were to be dealt with according to their nature and not the locality in which they happened to be. Land-matters in Tonkin and Tahiti were to be determined by one agency, as it was felt that they could be better managed by one trained official than by encyclopædic persons who would undertake to pronounce on each and every problem that might arise in a given colony. A more technical and specialized viewpoint, in fact, a comparative method of approach, was thus adopted. What was equally to the point, another step was taken in the direction of centralizing colonial matters. All colonial affairs were matters for Paris to decide, and the new system, by discounting the local groupings of the old, placed a new emphasis on the *general* nature of colonial problems. A blow was given, at least implicitly, to colonial individuality; and it was definitely in the minds of the reformers to minimize any significance that may have been attached to the old method of considering each colony as an entity in itself. The change of 1920 was far from haphazard. It was clearly a part of the post-war re-orientation of French colonial methods. It was a measure of efficiency, of specialization, of centralization, and largely designed to make the schemes of an imperial *mise en valeur* more effective. It was made clear to French colonies that they were primarily raw materials for the development of a national policy, and only secondarily entities in themselves. Hence the deprecation of any regional solution of their problem.

At present, therefore, the Ministry of the Colonies is divided into nine departments,—the Minister's own general department and secretariat, and then individual services for political matters, economic matters, military matters, general control, personnel, public works, health and the mercantile marine. Each of these divisions considers its own problems in every colony, the only vestige of the old system being in the political branch, where the *bureaux*, so familiar in French colonial history, are arranged so that they consider the problems of separate groups of colonies as entities. But the general rule is to group problems

<sup>14</sup> *Journal Officiel*, 15/8/20, or Messimy, *Notre Œuvre Coloniale* (1910), pp. 18-19.

according to their nature and not according to their geographical provenance.

It is not suggested that this system is free from defects. Geographical division did at least correlate the problems of any particular group and consider outside local forces: but the new system tends to isolate a given problem from its given context and neglect the complex of interests which are quite as important factors in the situation as the consideration of how similar problems are solved elsewhere. The present system would rather rob problems of their individuality, so to speak, and induces a mechanical point of view. But, as a Paris-trained official dealing with Madagascar alone would probably be as mechanical as his fellow considering only land-legislation in all the colonies, this argument loses a good deal of its practical force. The most obvious advantage of the new system remains the opportunity it gives for a uniform and continuous policy, both of which features were hampered under the earlier system.

Apart from its limitation to certain colonies, the organization of the Ministry of the Colonies is admittedly unsatisfactory. Much of the criticism is levelled at the hold of the permanent officials. The French colonial Ministry is as much an oligarchical body as was the British under Sir James Stephen, that Permanent Under-Secretary of State who, between 1836 and 1847, was the subject of endless attack as "Mr. Mother-Country" or "Over-Secretary Stephen." The Ministry in the Rue Oudinot reduces itself to the permanent *bureaux*, with more or less surface concessions to the idiosyncrasies of the politician or party in power for the moment. The permanent officials are everything, the Minister, unless of an outstanding personality, a subsidiary, both to the other Ministers and to his own officials.

"There have been so many quarrels over centralization and decentralization that, in the end, the Minister of the Colonies is only left with a pen to sign the more or less useless papers of a meticulous and effete bureaucracy. Is the Minister then a controlling agency? Is he an agent of direction? Is he any other thing? Not at all. In fact, he is thirteenth at the Council of Ministers: in his room at the Rue Oudinot, he is invariably an amiable and courteous colleague who cannot take the personal and immediate decisions that he should be able to do, because he is in the hands of the neighbouring Departments."<sup>15</sup>

Thus limited, and with the political head more a communicating-agent with such Ministries as that of Finance than anything else, the Colonial Department pursues its grinding way,—what the opposition rejoices to call "administrative *tracasserie*,"—irrespective of political

<sup>15</sup> See Chap. III, note 20. For the position of the Minister, see Bluysen, "Le Rôle et les Pouvoirs du Ministère des Colonies," in *Colonies et Marine*, Oct. 1920, pp. 573-585—an important article.

changes. Most of the ordinary affairs in colonial life are determined by the dictates of the permanent officers in Paris: add to this the lack of self-government in the colonies, and it will be obvious why France is a century behind England in this regard. In fact, the criticisms that Roebuck and Hume and Wakefield hurled at the British Colonial Office in the thirties of last century could be applied almost verbatim to the Rue Oudinot to-day.

This position is inevitable as long as the theory of administrative centralization remains fashionable, and it has resisted most attacks up to the present. Ever since 1894 there has been a continual duel between the two theories of centralization and devolution of powers, but the issue was largely foregone. The reformers submitted various schemes of reform, but always in a half-hearted manner, because they realized that the fortifications they were planning to take by assault were practically impregnable, French administrative life being what it is. The Ministry was obviously attempting too much with an inadequate organization, they said. It wanted to keep every detail of colonial administration under its control, even after the institution of the Governments-General. Even granting the wisdom of this, a smoothly running organization was necessary: yet, as Messimy reported in his budget-speech of 1910, the Ministry, in its existing form, was only "a confused group of services which has nothing in common with what a great State administration should be."<sup>16</sup>

To improve this situation, two kinds of reforms were put forward,—the first to define and limit the functions of the Ministry, and the second to secure a more efficient exercise of its powers. The first of these was the more urgent, because the congestion of affairs was so great that even vital matters were delayed. To minimize this, Milliès-Lacroix, the Minister of Colonies at the close of 1907, proposed to take away purely local services from the central Ministry and hand them over to an Agency-General of the Colonies.<sup>17</sup> That would leave the Ministry free to handle questions of general policy and enable it to be a directing and co-ordinating agency, instead of actually checking administrative details. But Doumer, the budget-reporter of that year, although he had served in Indo-China and should have been better informed, declared that there was no need for reorganization: and it is asserted that the other members of the Budget Commission either could not understand the proposals or ignored them, the result being that they were shelved. Three years later, Messimy, who had taken up the mantle of Milliès-Lacroix, went even further and demanded, not one, but several Agencies-General, one for each group of

<sup>16</sup> Messimy in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 5/4/11, 28/5/11.

<sup>17</sup> *Quinzaine Coloniale*, 25/7/07, p. 81.

colonies.<sup>18</sup> In effect, he wanted to set up an executive council for each geographical group, sitting in Paris and in general supervising the affairs of that group in the same way as the Ministry had hitherto done. De Lanessan, the reformer of a quarter of a century before, had asserted that, without such a geographical grouping, the French Empire could know neither meaning nor efficiency: and now, Messimy was carrying this idea out by arranging for an Agency-General as a complement for every Government-General. A Government-General on the spot and an Agency-General in Paris with the Ministry co-ordinating all activities,—that was his proposed system: and, of course, his Agencies were not to be the trade-*bureaux* that were afterwards established, but Government departments controlling administration.

Messimy wanted decentralization above all things. In a report of May, 1911, for instance, he said specifically that the Ministry of the Colonies had to be different from every other Ministry, because all traces of the customary French centralization had to be eradicated.<sup>19</sup> A decree of the same month established his ideas in practice, and, for a time, the Ministry was divided into certain general sections, with extra departments for each of four groups of colonies.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, the scheme was never given a chance, because Messimy's successor held opposite views and suppressed the new organization. Then came the war and the unquestioned triumph of the principle of centralization,—a principle that was accepted entirely in the above-mentioned reorganization of 1920, which divided the Ministry's functions from the point of view of Paris and sounded the death-knell of the system of decentralization. The implications of the local budgets of 1900, of the Governments-General, and of the reforms of 1911 were thus all swept aside: and the colonial Ministry remains as centralized and as rigid as any other French Ministry. Messimy's pleas for an elastic control and for the entry of local influences remain, it is true, for does not a beneficent Government make the pages of the *Journal Officiel* available to good citizens at the Imprimerie Nationale? They can see for themselves that such wondrous plans were actually proposed, but, for purposes of practical policy, the schemes of 1911 are as ineffective as if they had never been made.

The French Ministry of Colonies is therefore the mouthpiece of central interests. It has no function of linking the interests of both colony and mother-country: it speaks for Paris. Nor is it concerned only with questions of general policy: it administers and governs as well as decides policy. It is the apex of the colonial administrative

<sup>18</sup> Messimy, *Notre Œuvre Coloniale* (1910), p. 398.

<sup>19</sup> In *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 28/5/11.

<sup>20</sup> Decrees of 20, 26/5/11.

structure—and not in the sense of confirming what has already been achieved so much as in deciding and executing details of government. It has the same relation to the colonies that the Ministry of the Interior has to the cantons and *arrondissements* of mainland France, and this relationship even extends to groups of colonies possessing a Government-General. The word *bureaux* is not a mere rhetorical flourish in describing the French colonial system: it is the colonial system. The *bureaux* are all-powerful, and, save for Parliament (or rather, the permanent Commissions which dominate Parliament in the French political world), unchecked: <sup>21</sup> and every detail of colonial existence comes within their ken. They are the central fact in French colonial life, for they determine and execute the policy, which indeed is inconceivable without them.<sup>22</sup>

## II. The Conseil Supérieur des Colonies

The Ministry is aided by a number of outside agencies, of which the most grandiose, if not the most important, is the *Conseil Supérieur des Colonies*,—the Upper Colonial Council. Just after the Under-Secretariat of State for the Colonies was created, a decree of October 19, 1883, set up this Council as a kind of advisory assembly for all colonial matters. The aim was to be able to obtain a symposium from experts on any given question. Gambetta had just insisted on the need for an effective organization of the colonies, and Ferry was showing how technical a problem colonial administration was. Colonial questions could not be decided on general principles: the need was for an expert presentation of facts and a sifting of authoritative opinion. A clearing-house of colonial administration was needed,—some means whereby the joint colonial *Zeitgeist* of any moment could be made available to Parliament or to the administrative officials in Paris. Colonization was becoming more economic, and it was but fitting, therefore, that the determination of policy should be scientific rather than haphazard. The result of this changed attitude was the *Conseil Supérieur*.<sup>23</sup> Everything went well for about three years. The body met frequently, and proffered much information and advice. Then it suddenly ceased to function for over thirty years. So moribund was it that it seemed fitting at one time to include dead men in its list of members!

The reasons for this setback were many and obvious. The Council was too large and cumbrous, in the first place. It included 146 members, and effective action, even for non-controversial matters, is practically

<sup>21</sup> Article by Bluysen, "Le Rôle et les Pouvoirs du Ministère des Colonies," *op. cit.*, p. 583.

<sup>22</sup> Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, pp. 236-240.

<sup>23</sup> Dislère, *Traité de Législation Coloniale* (1906 edition), Vol. I, p. 254.

impossible with such numbers. By the nature of things, too, the experts who comprised it would largely be retired men whom it would be difficult to gather together,—a difficulty that was still more obvious in the case of representatives from the colonies. Then again, even if the body could work rapidly and effectively, its utility lay chiefly in the formative stage of colonial history. As the organization of the colonies proceeded, there would be other, and more official, means of securing information and advice. Permanent officials would be in a better position than outsiders to effect these services, and a *bureau* would be quicker and more efficient than grinding out advice from this unwieldy Parliament of experts. They were damned by their number, and, human nature being what it is, probably by their dogmatism and preconceived ideas.

The Council was thus rendered anomalous, or, at least, could serve only in a different capacity from that anticipated in 1883. The departments of the Ministry of the Colonies could do most of its work after 1894, and Parliamentary Commissions, like the famous Algerian Commission of 1892, could investigate special questions. Moreover, the institution of the various Governments-General after 1895 placed more matters under local control and, in particular, those on which the Parisian officials would be in most need of local knowledge. Each Government-General tended to become a State within a State. The Governor-General and his Council attended to many details which would otherwise have gone to the Ministry, and, in many cases, Paris slipped into a position of ratifying rather than deciding. This was aided by the movement in favour of decentralization in the years immediately preceding the war of 1914 and by the implicit recognition that the colonies were obtaining more individuality: and each step away from Paris meant an added reason why the old *Conseil Supérieur* should not be revived.

The events of the war, however, changed all this. The colonial question suddenly assumed a new importance, and outgrew the local colonies. France's destiny came to be linked up with, and in part to depend on, colonial development. The colonies were by no means the least important factor in the great economic problem that confronted a war-broken France, and, in the recuperation, the primal need was for the most effective utilization of all resources. This meant that the colonies had to work as a whole, that the development of one group had to fit in with that of others, and, above all, that there had to be a uniform policy. In a word the conditions of 1883 found themselves largely duplicated. There had to be a more effective survey of colonial problems, a finer focusing of expert contributions in Paris, and a more immediate consultation of colonial representatives. All three of these, it was held, could be secured by infusing new vitality into the old *Conseil Supérieur*.

It had aided in the original stage, and, if it had fallen into disuse during the period of administrative organization, it could once more perform functions now that the time had come for France to reap the rewards of her colonial sacrifices. The Council could play a large part in systematizing the harvest, and incidentally, its revival would do much to counteract the growing movements of colonial discontent. There were thus the two sets of ideas behind its revival. It could help in the new *mise en valeur* of the Empire, and it could play the part the Imperial Conference played in the British Empire.

This was made quite clear in the *exposé des motifs* that accompanied the proposals of 1920 to reconstitute the Council.<sup>24</sup> Sarraut, in introducing the new decree, said definitely that there was a need of greater continuity in colonial policy, especially on the economic side, and an equally obvious need for a permanent contact between metropolitan thought and colonial life. The two motives were mixed: the change was at once a gesture in the direction of consulting the colonies and a measure for securing efficiency.

Under the decree of September 28, 1920, therefore, the *Conseil Supérieur* became a real advisory Parliament of experts. As now constituted, it consists of three parts, which meet separately as well as in a general forum. The first section, the *Haut Conseil Colonial*, is to advise on matters concerning the general development and administration of the colonies, and especially on native policy. It consists of all ex-Ministers of the Colonies, all ex-Governors-General, and representatives from the Foreign, War and Naval Ministeries. It is entirely a body of experienced officials and does not pretend to consult colonial opinion. It might be called the political council or inner Cabinet, created to discuss the problems of wider policy. It is practically the nerve-centre of the organism, and the functions of the other parts are more detailed. The second section, the Colonial Economic Council (*Conseil Economique des Colonies*), is, as the name implies, a body limited to economic functions. It advises on the exploitation and general commerce of the colonies, and in particular on the interactions between the industrial life of France and the colonies. Its composition is far wider than that of the political section, and is largely unofficial. All the colonial representatives in Parliament belong to it *ex officio*: the fourteen delegates elected to the *Conseil Supérieur* by the colonies sit here: and, in addition, any number of experts may be added. It is divided into seven sections, each dealing with a special phase of economic life in the colonies, and any number of these sectional groups may meet in common. This will be the body which will consider the numerous details of colonial development, and it may

<sup>24</sup> *Journal Officiel*, 30/9/20, p. 1445 *et seq.*

safely be said that herein will lie the chief practical utility of the new *Conseil Supérieur*. The third section of the *Conseil* is more specialized, but performs a very definite function. It is the Council of Colonial Legislation and is to be consulted regarding all legislative or financial reforms which affect the colonies. It consists of four high officials, but the representatives of the colony concerned are admitted when a matter relating to one colony is being dealt with.

To all three sections alike, other officials or native representatives may be called. Indeed, the membership of each section may be termed fluid, consisting of a more or less permanent nucleus around which temporary members gather for the discussion of any special question. As is usual in French colonization, metropolitan interests are carefully safeguarded. The bulk of the members of the various sections are officials, or, by reason of the method of nomination, favourable to the official view-point. The only elective element consists of the colonial representatives in Parliament and the *Conseil* itself, and they are insignificant in number and chosen only by the French citizens in the colonies. They are essentially minority representatives. A curious point in connection with the fourteen delegates elected by the colonies to the *Conseil Supérieur* is that officials are excluded, presumably with the idea of giving articulation to the wider colonial interests.

The reorganization of the *Conseil* was completed by a decree of October 6, 1925, which arranged for an annual plenary session of its sections.<sup>25</sup> Their duty at this joint meeting was to examine the questions that had been discussed by the Economic or Legislative Councils. This step did something to approximate the *Conseil Supérieur* to the British Imperial Conference, although, on the whole, there is little similarity between the two bodies. Both have the same aims, but there the resemblance ends. The fundamental distinction is that the French body is of wider composition and less authority. In practice, it comes to mean the predominance of Paris officials, and yet the highest officials concerned, the Minister and Under-Secretary, for instance, do not enter it. The British body, to the contrary, has far more colonial officials, yet the most important British statesmen join too. The *Conseil Supérieur* has a majority of home officials, and yet they do not speak authoritatively, so far as the determination of policy is concerned. The Imperial Conference, however, consists of the colonial politicians in office for the time being, and is thus representative and responsible. Its members shape policy, the French body only influences it indirectly. The resolutions of the one are simply resolutions, those of the other find expression in results. By inference, this means that the French body tends to discuss

<sup>25</sup> E. Antonelli, *Manuel de Législation Coloniale* (1926), p. 75.

details, while the general policies are determined by the *bureaux* and politicians: whereas the British Conference, ignoring details, discusses general questions of Imperial policy. The Imperial Conference is for a different kind of consultation and works differently. If the colonial governors actually in office were called to Paris, if they were joined by the heads of the Ministries dealing with colonial matters and if a few of the representatives and official specialists of the *Conseil Supérieur* were added, there might be a body somewhat resembling the British Imperial Conference. They might then discuss the matters dealt with in the plenary session of the present *Conseil* and deal with them more authoritatively. They could thus shape policy instead of merely proffering advice, and be a crucial body instead of a more or less ornamental appendage.<sup>26</sup> The cumbrous form of the *Conseil Supérieur*, even with its new constitution, predestines it to a comparative mediocrity: and its divorce both from the real heads of the colonial world in Paris and from the major administrators in the colonies makes it unimportant. It is interesting, but it lacks vitality and, after all, remains a ponderous excrescence growing outside the general colonial body, instead of having a definite rôle inside it. What is needed is a small executive council composed of officials whose decisions can be accepted and small enough to work efficiently. Without these two characteristics, no colonial conference can be really effective, especially in the present inchoate form of the French Empire.

There is thus much ground for the complaint of reformers that France has no real councils for colonial matters. Lucien Hubert's criticism that the *Conseil Supérieur* was "defunct before having lived" seems justified,<sup>27</sup> in view of previous experience with such ponderous councils out of touch with realities: and there is no regional council like the Council of India. If such councils are out of the question for all of the colonies, there is no reason why there may not be, for instance, a real advisory council for the three States of North Africa. Indeed, one might go further, and claim powers of direction for such a Council, in addition to purely advisory functions. This does not mean to suggest that details of administration should come before such a body: the French system already provides, and more than provides, for such details. What is needed is, as Hubert says, a regulator to accelerate the slow march of the heavy machine of the Rue Oudinot—a body to keep its finger on the pulse of colonial matters and suggest stimulants. There could easily be one of these directing Councils for North Africa, one

<sup>26</sup> *Recueil des Délibérations du Congrès Colonial National*, 1889-1890, Vol. I, pp. 34-38, for the four functions such a Council might exercise.

<sup>27</sup> L. Hubert, *Une Politique Coloniale* (1918), pp. 30-31.

for the negro colonies of Africa, one for Indo-China, and one for the *anciens colonies* and the scattered possessions. They would be regional councils with authority to act and too important to have their suggestions merely pigeon-holed. The demand is for a living assembly really directing the affairs of each colony,—not, be it noted, for a representative body, but for a decentralizing official body, with perhaps a little colonial representation. This is quite a different matter from the constitutional development of the colonies themselves: the issue here is for effective direction and administration.

It might almost be asserted that there is no choice in the matter. Present French policy is in the direction of curtailing the autonomy of the Governors-General: the decision of December, 1926, in connection with Indo-China, hitherto the most independent of the Governments-General, clearly exemplifies this trend of the whole of the post-war colonial policy of France: and the ban on the political development of councils within the colonies has been so repeatedly affirmed as to admit of no cavil. With colonial assemblies thus throttled and colonial officials limited in their activities, there is no link evolving between France and the colonies. The gap is there beyond dispute and will become the more serious as the colonies develop. The *bureaux*, already overburdened and unadaptable, cannot fill it: the *Conseil Supérieur* is doomed to petty matters by its very composition: permanent or semi-permanent Commissions have not developed in France as they have in Great Britain: and there seems no solution beyond such regional Councils sitting in Paris.

At one time, during the feverish series of councils from 1905 onwards, it seemed as if non-official or semi-official councils were emerging to prove the possibility of development in geographical groups<sup>28</sup>; but nothing came of the experiment, except a series of valuable reports and a realization that such regional councils could conceivably be evolved if the inclination were present. But there seemed no immediate need for them, and many arguments were adduced against them. For instance, it was asserted that the embryonic financial bodies of the colonies,—the *Délégations Financières* of Algeria, the *Conférence Consultative* of Tunisia, and the *Conseils Supérieurs* of the other colonies,—served this function: but, when limits were placed on their development and they were forbidden to change with the changing circumstances, this assertion lost all its point. Moreover, the need was not for an advisory or checking body under the local officials, but for a directing agency *over* them. Clearly, there is no existing body that meets or that can expand so that it will

<sup>28</sup> See previously quoted reports of Colonial Congress of Marseilles (1906), Bordeaux (1907), the Old Colonies (1909), North Africa (1909), East Africa (1912), etc.

meet, the demands of the post-war French Empire, and it is idle to dream of any single Council that can deal with the problems of so diverse an Empire. The solution must be along the line of regional *blocs*, with executive councils for each. There are, it is true, various committees functioning at present, for such matters as colonial banks, social legislation, and native affairs; but these are limited in scope and uncertain in action. The demand is for generalized Commissions on a geographical basis. Until they come, the French colonial structure will remain top-heavy,—with an undue stress on the Paris officials and a retarded colonial development, and with no effective link between Paris and the colonies.

In addition to such regional councils, there is also room for a Colonial Conference on the English model. A start was made in this direction in 1917. In June of that year, André Maginot, the Minister of the Colonies in the Ribot Cabinet, convened a gathering something on the lines of the British Imperial Conference. Though the meeting was nominally to commence a systematic inventory of the French colonies, preliminary to the general *mise en valeur* scheme, Maginot stated definitely that his aims were far wider. His real object, he said in his opening speech, was “to end that lack of co-ordination which has too long been evident in the determination of our colonial policy.” The Council went to work at once, and drew up a valuable series of economic *cahiers* for the various colonies. So successful were they in collecting data and formulating conclusions that Maginot, by a decree of August, 1917, created an “Executive Commission,” presided over by Senator Bérenger, to give practical expression to their views. But, unfortunately, the Ribot Cabinet fell in the next month, and the scheme was soon forgotten. Yet it had shown what could be done, even under unfavourable conditions.<sup>29</sup>

The idea went on, however, and Hubert and the other constructive reformers urged the establishment of an Imperial Council to discuss the general problems of the Empire. It was to follow the model of the Imperial Conference of Great Britain, but, taking into account the peculiar conditions of the French Empire, such a body would perhaps be more akin to the Imperial War Cabinet of Great Britain, because it would have the power to come to decisions and act upon them, just as the Imperial War Cabinet did, without the need of consulting the colonies. The fact that the French colonies have not any dominion status or responsible government as yet allows such an Imperial body to fuse the characteristics of the Imperial War Cabinet and the ordinary Imperial Conference, and avoids those thorny questions of responsibility that made

<sup>29</sup> An incomplete *Compte Rendu* was published of this Conference. A good account is in Regismanset (1923), *op. cit.*, Vol. II.

the continuance of the Imperial War Cabinet impossible under ordinary peace conditions. The French body would probably commence by being mainly advisory; and conditions, depending largely on its *personnel*, would determine the degree to which it would become an arbiter of policy or an executive agency. The scope for development in either direction is there, and, even in the more limited form, it would be possible to perform valuable service. Fully developed, such a body would act both in a permanent and a moderating form. It might minimize the disruptive influence exerted on colonial matters by the chameleon politics of France, and at the same time prevent that rigidity and official paralysis which a too great reliance on the *bureaux* has always secured in the past. France stands to gain in every way by the innovation and at the worst, if such an Imperial Council were stillborn, it could be put aside like the old *Conseil Supérieur*,—a monument to the ingenuity of the jurists and a reminder that the word *tâtonnement* is the closest rival of *tracasserie* in being the most used in French colonial annals.

### III. Inspection and Control

If France has no effective Councils to link the colonies with the mother-country, she has another curious link,—one peculiarly French and developed far more than in the case of any other Power. This is the institution known as “*l’Inspection des Colonies*,”<sup>30</sup>—a permanent department whose function it is to be a link between central and local administration, and to secure interactions between the two. Primarily, this body exercises the necessary control on behalf of the central government,—a function which is viewed as far more important than more or less nebulous Council schemes. Instituted in its present form by the codifying decree of April 1, 1921, but going back in its essentials to 1879, it arranges for a permanent supervision in Paris and for a “mobile inspection” by officials who travel round the colonies demanding explanations of any unusual features they may find. These inspectors correspond *directly* with the Minister, and unusual care is taken to secure their probity and isolation. In addition, there is a “permanent control,” which is, as the name indicates, a body of inspection fixed in each of the three Governments-General. Finally, and distinct again, a “financial controller” is placed opposite each Governor-General to supervise all the acts of administration.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> See lengthy sections on inspection in any French colonial treatise (e.g. Foignet, 1925, p. 110, or Girault, 1922, 2.1.352) for the importance attributed to this institution in the colonial system.

<sup>31</sup> For its inception see report of 1889 Colonial Congress, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 45 *et seq.* A valuable report is by Girault in *Institut Colonial International. Compte Rendu*, 1908 session, p. 289 *et seq.*

The British system knows nothing like this over-elaborate control. The nearest approach is when Parliamentary Commissions or Committees visit individual colonies to examine some particular question, as with the McNeil-Chimman Lal committee for indentured Indians in 1912 or the Ormsby-Gore Commissions on African affairs in 1924-1925. But, apart from such extraordinary inquiries, all control is in the hands of the local parliaments or executive, according to the degree of responsible government. Naturally, colonial acts are overlooked at the Colonial and India Offices, just as they are by the *Direction du Contrôle* in Paris, but the British system does not provide for permanent officials who act as peripatetic spies acting independently of the normal administrators in the colony. Such a system is as extraneous to the English idea as the inquisitorial system of French justice is opposed to the British conception.

The French system is a typically Latin form of officialdom and must work in the direction of stifling individuality amongst the officials concerned. Risky or unconventional methods can never be employed, however they may be justified by the outcome. The means must always be scrupulously conventional, even if the results are trammelled by doing so. The form is everything, the goal nothing. The official must account for every act at any moment, and simply becomes an automaton. There is no room for those brilliant hazards which have been so noticeable in the colonial history, especially the native policy, of other Powers. The French system is one of excessive control,—and of the inertness and suspicion that such control engenders.

The British system assumes that the distance of the colonies necessitates a larger scope for the individual official and a consequent freedom from supervision: whereas the French hold that distance, inasmuch as it permits officials to abuse their powers the more easily, should necessitate a stricter control, if that were possible. It is realized that the factor of distance makes a greater concentration of power in the hands of individuals absolutely necessary, but the argument is that, the greater the powers, the more stringent the control. To them, power means potential corruption: hence the need for checks to prevent abuse or to restore the damage.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, power in the English system means opportunity for the individual. Thus, in the Pacific, the junior Resident in the Solomons is practically an untrammelled potentate in his district, if affairs go well; whereas, in New Caledonia, he is but a cog in a machine, and as powerless as a clerk in a *Mairie* in France.

There has never been anything like a travelling surveillance-corps in the British system, except within each colony, and it is difficult to think

<sup>32</sup> *Institut Colonial International. Compte Rendu*, 1905 session, for Girault, *De la surveillance à exercer sur les fonctionnaires aux colonies*, for this point of view.

of minor officials sending critical correspondence to the Colonial Office on the subject of the heads of the colony for the time being. This would be at variance with the whole English theory of official responsibility. In Great Britain, every colonial official represents the dignity and probity of the State: with the French, he is a potential self-seeker, and the assumption is that corruption will emerge unless checked. The one system thinks of opportunity for service, the other of opportunity for corruption.

Indeed, the whole system of *inspection* as carried out in the French colonies, however admirable it may be in theory, is one of the most striking instances of the sterility of their exaggerated officialdom. It is typical of the checks and balances of French official life; and represents that point of view which is so much concerned with the eradication of every loophole that might conceivably lead to abuse that it imposes numerous handicaps on average efficiency. A desire for theoretical perfection overrides practical requirements. The system is based on considerations of what might possibly happen, but it considers remote and unusual contingencies rather than the normal state of affairs. If it is true that such exaggerated checks are necessary to prevent abuse, then the entire colonial structure is at fault. What is needed is not an elaborate preventive organization so much as a training in *morale*. The French *inspection* reduces the problem to one of machinery: in reality, it is a moral matter. If, as they argue, material gain rather than service to his country is the aim of the colonial administrator, something is radically wrong with the education of their officials. In this sense, the very elaborateness of the decree of 1921 is the best testimony to the power of this cancer in undermining the body-colonial of France.

That is, there are two possibilities. Either the checks are needed or not needed. If they are, the French have no adequate concept of the nature of colonization as a duty. If they are not, they insult the great mass of French officials and condemn the French system as being impractically theoretical. In either case, a weak situation is revealed. Yet the French see in it only an admirable piece of *liaison*-work,—a wonderfully executed system of counterpoises something in the nature of an intricate and smoothly running mechanism. The curious feature is that there is no opposition to the system. At the time of the changes of 1921, the bulk of the reforms were simply on points of detail, such as moving the seat of the inspectors from Paris to the colonies. The system was accepted without dispute, it was only the manner of its enforcement that caused discussion. If anything, the codification of 1921 rendered it more stringent than ever and it remains an integral and seemingly ineradicable feature of French colonial organization.

Viewed as a theoretical system, the French *service d'inspection* is admittedly well rounded-off.<sup>33</sup> It certainly secures the independence of the inspectors,—at least, in so far as this can be made to depend on mechanical factors. The inspector belongs to a closed service: he can never become an administrator, nor can any administrator hope to enter his ranks. A man chooses an inspectorial career, and must remain an inspector. He thus has nothing to fear from any active official, because none of them, unless they resign and become politicians, can conceivably affect his destinies. He corresponds directly with the Minister, and, having in French parlance “the right to see all and hear all,” bases his report on the fullest information. And the final ban on any form of self-interest seems to be obtained by the rigid limitation of his functions to criticism. He is never an executive agent. At first, the system, as introduced to the Ile-de-Bourbon, allowed inspectors to carry out as well as to recommend reforms. But this confusion of executive and legislative acts made possible an element of self-interest, the result being that a decree of April, 1873, suppressed the old fixed controllers and instituted the idea of mobility. Ever since then, this has remained the essence of the scheme and a safeguard against the intrusion of purely local interests. Under no conditions can an inspector at present undertake administrative duties: under no conditions can he pander to particular interests. He is apart and above reproach.

But even this aloofness has its defects, because, by maintaining themselves apart from the ordinary channels of colonial existence, they are not readily susceptible to local currents of opinion and become somewhat colourless. Further, they tend to become automata expressing the point of view of the Ministry of the Colonies. They retain the mind of a functionary, although obviously their chief justification would be an alertness and originality quite outside the official mentality. In practice the only difference comes to be that their mechanical thought reflects the central point of view, as distinct from, or usually opposed to, the colonial. But the point is that the flexibility which would have rendered them so useful is overlaid by this pall of official outlook. Officials check officials, and the result is largely foregone,—sterility. The effective method of supervision—that employed by the English—consists in bringing a fresh mind to bear upon the situation. De Lanessan's missions in Indo-China or Ferry's in Algeria best prove this. They were the most fertile investigations in French colonial history, the best checks on colonial errors, and the most useful suggestions for future development.

<sup>33</sup> Girault, 1922, *op. cit.*, 21.1.361-363. See documents in *Les Fonctionnaires Coloniaux*, Vol. III, 1910 (publication of Bibliothèque Colonial International, 2nd series), p. 255.

But general inspection by officials who deal with the peculiar local conditions of a certain colony under the dictates of a supposed faculty of "general investigation" seems predestined to be relatively barren. Reforms of moment are scarcely likely to come in this manner, and such haphazard and *ex post facto* investigations are by no means the best means of either preventing or punishing delinquencies. The whole system, in fact, is very symmetrical, rather cumbrous, and not very useful.<sup>34</sup>

#### IV. Legislation for the Colonies

Having seen what bodies exist to connect Paris and the colonies, it is necessary to see exactly how legislation is worked out in practice for the colonies. This at once brings us to the crux of the whole colonial issue,—the vexed question of decentralization. Perhaps no other issue in French colonial policy has been so much discussed and so little solved. The whole ground is gone over periodically, each time as bitterly as before, and always with the same result. France does not seem able to choose between centralization and decentralization,—or rather, finds it difficult to decide how much decentralization will be accepted. The natural French instinct is for centralization: colonial evolution demands an increasing degree of decentralization: yet every consecutive concession is obtained only by the force of circumstances. Each one is fought for as it arises: there is no gracious concession of what will be inevitable in a few months. Paris is generally just behind, instead of just before, each increase of colonial power,—although therein lies the whole secret of effective colonial administration. The tardiness in this direction is the major cause of friction in the French colonial Empire.

The first feature of the situation,<sup>35</sup> from a legislative point of view, is that the supremacy of the French Parliament cannot be challenged. All power, residuary or otherwise, resides in Parliament, and the colonies have no powers unless specifically provided for. The French Parliament can veto any colonial legislation, even for those matters which were specifically given to certain colonies by the *sénatus-consulte* of 1854. The power of veto, far from being a meaningless survival as it is in the British Empire, is a very real instrument of maintaining central control. There is no convention of the constitution that it will not be employed, as in the case of the British Dominions; and so much is this understood that there is not a single protest in colonial literature against it or against

<sup>34</sup> For a frank statement of the criticisms of the system, and an answer to them, see Girault, 1922, 2.1.369.

<sup>35</sup> The best analysis of the situation is in Daresté, *Recueil Colonial*, 1915 ("Le Législateur colonial"), and 1912 ("Le promulgation et l'application des lois aux colonies"). What seems to be a disproportionately large space is generally devoted to "le régime législatif" in French colonial treatises.

the legislating powers of the French Parliament. This represents the very spirit of French colonial theory.

A second principle is that the French Parliament can legislate for all colonies, even those which have the special privilege of a Government-General and a Council with budgetary powers. Not all French Acts apply to the colonies, it is true, but all may, by the inclusion of a special article, be made to so apply. Outside of such specifically applied laws, it is by no means clear how far the colonies come under metropolitan laws. Theory and practice and law all differ on the point. Even more confused is the question as to how otherwise the colonies may be legislated for.<sup>36</sup>

The starting-point is the distinction between France and the colonies, and its nature. Despite the principle of assimilation and the various pronouncements of the Revolutionary Assemblies that the colonies were "integral parts of the French Republic," it was clear that there was some distinction. The tendency in practice was to assume that the colonies were under a distinct *régime*. This was the case with all the constitutions of the nineteenth century, although, curiously enough, the existing constitution—that of 1873—is silent on the question. The result is that, in default of specific legislation on the topic, the matter has been relegated to juridical theory, while it has been taken for granted that the colonies *are* under a special *régime*. This seemed easy enough, but, unfortunately, did nothing to clear up the difficulty. It is clear that the colonies must have different arrangements from those of the mainland departments, and clear, too, that there must be special laws for them in many fields. But the real question is, how far do French laws apply *ipso facto* to the colonies, or how far they may be made so to apply, and, how, over and above this means of convertibility, legislation may be provided for the colonies? In practice the position is most confused. All French laws do not apply to the colonies, yet certain laws do, and others are specifically made for the colonies: but over and above these are many laws, not made for the colonies, not even extended to them by a special clause, yet still taken as applying to the overseas possessions.<sup>37</sup> It seems incredible that this position could pertain, but one has to remember the dominance of the *bureaux* in French colonization and their decision of policy to a large degree outside of Parliament altogether. Nor is this position as inexplicable as the failure even to mention the colonies in the organic law of a country which has a written constitution and which is thus, in theory at least, rigid.

Actually, the legislative *régime* of the colonies is determined by a *sénatus-consulte* of the Second Empire. As the Republican Constitution

<sup>36</sup> Dislère, *Traité de Législation Coloniale* (1906 edition), Vol. I, p. 249 *et seq.*

<sup>37</sup> See instance of this in Girault, 1922, 2.1.180, note 3.

failed to provide for them, there was no other way out of the difficulty than by falling back on some earlier measure. Before the fall of the Empire, the Constitution of 1854 was in operation. This had been most concise on the matter of colonial organization.<sup>38</sup> It had divided the colonies into two classes,—“the old colonies” (the sugar-islands of the West Indies and Réunion) and “the other colonies,” providing a more advanced *régime* for the former. The latter were taken as the norm. For them, legislation was to be by means of a simple Imperial decree. This was to be the system for all new colonies and for the existing colonies until they achieved a certain degree of development. When the Emperor thought that they had developed sufficiently, they were to come under the more privileged *régime* vouchsafed to the Old Colonies. In their case, decrees were to be used only for those cases not provided for in any other way. They were exceptions to the decree-*régime*. Certain matters had to be dealt with by decrees of the Council of State (as distinct from Imperial decrees), others by *sénatus-consultes*, while, for commercial matters, a law was necessary. It was only for the odds and ends that a simple decree sufficed. The bulk of legislation was done by some form of law, so that these privileged colonies could be termed “colonies under the law-*régime*,” as distinct from those still under decrees. The division under the Empire was extremely complicated and purely arbitrary. In view of the emphasis on colonial subordination, it was clear why a special law was necessary for tariff changes, although why property-matters came under a *sénatus-consulte*, and justice and education under the Council of State, is not clear, unless it was that Parliament desired to keep all economic matters directly under its control.

After this, the principle gradually emerged that, while certain specific matters required laws, the great bulk were settled for the colonies by decrees,—simple decrees for the backward colonies, decrees sanctioned by the Council of State for others. But this principle should have been of solely academic importance in 1871, unless it were specifically re-enacted in some form or other. Article 27 of the Constitution of 1854 should have ceased to function with that Constitution itself, but the Republicans, having failed to provide for the colonies in their own Constitution, had to resort to casuistry to keep the old law in operation. By some juridical subtlety, it was agreed that the *sénatus-consulte* of 1854, while losing its constitutional character, could remain as a law: it was only “de-constitutionalized,” to use the catchword of 1875.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Mérignhac, *Précis de Législation et d'économie coloniales* (1912), p. 254 et seq.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 256.—“It remains then only as an ordinary law which should have been voted before the advent of the republican *régime*.” Compare E. Antonelli, *Manuel de Législation Coloniale* (1926), p. 61.

It was reduced to the status of a simple law, although what attribute of mind prevented a similar argument applying to every other section of the Constitution of 1854 is not clear, particularly as the retention of Article 27 was nowhere specifically provided for, or even mentioned. It was simply assumed and has remained ever since. The whole colonial *régime* of France is thus worthless from a legal point of view and rests solely on an untenable convention. Theory and practice in a country with a written constitution by no means always coincide: but, even so such a faulty fundamental law is a trifle bizarre, to say the least of it.

The present position of jurisprudence in this regard, therefore, is that the French Parliament can, and does, legislate for the colonies on all matters. Metropolitan laws are not usually, but under certain conditions may be, applicable to the colonies without a specific clause to that effect. Over and above such laws, all colonial legislation, except for certain matters dealt with in the Constitution, is vested in the *executive* power. Legislation, subject to the restrictions of the *sénatus-consulte* of 1854, is by decree; and even metropolitan laws, while not specifically extended to the colonies, may in effect be applied to them by this means. That is, the legislator for the colonies under ordinary conditions is not Parliament (though Parliament may always intervene), but the President of the Republic. This suffices for all cases in which the *sénatus-consulte* of 1854 does not stipulate a law: for such exceptional matters (such as the *état civil* of colonists or the commercial *régime*) a law of the French Parliament is needed. Save for this, the decree is triumphant, in Algeria and the mandated territories as in the other colonies. The most serious limitations are that decrees cannot interfere in questions which have already been specifically dealt with by laws, and that the Constitution must be observed. The latter proviso implies that no decree can touch matters concerning State finances. A law, for example, was needed for the concession of the Dakar railway, because the State guaranteed a certain revenue, but not for the Saigon-Mytho railway in Indo-China, because there the guarantee was by the colony.<sup>40</sup>

What is evident from this arrangement is that no colonial assembly can really legislate, except for those budgetary expenses which are termed "optional." They may recommend changes, but these are ineffective unless and until the executive issues a decree proclaiming them. The only exceptions are in the protectorates of Tunisia and Morocco, where the decrees of the Bey or the *dahirs* of the Sultan are laws. But, in the colonies proper, legislation is either by a law of the French Parliament or, in ordinary cases, by an executive decree,—a

<sup>40</sup> Mérygnac (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 265.

position scarcely comprehensible to one accustomed to the English idea of responsible government.

This system of legislation by decrees, though occasionally praised for its rapidity and elasticity, is the subject of much attack, especially by jurists. The whole situation, especially because of the basis of 1854, is a nightmare from a juridical point of view, and, even if unassailable from this standpoint, not in accord with the needs of a great Empire. It can only be explained as a survival from earlier *régimes*,—a limping compromise that is neither clear in law nor efficient in practice. It has been asserted that its main justification is the desire of the central administration to keep the power of colonial legislation within its own hands, with the least possible amount of discussion or restriction. In its present form, the position is complicated,—that goes without saying. It is uncertain. Who can say, for instance, if any French laws since 1834 apply to Algeria, if no stipulation to that effect is provided in them? <sup>41</sup> It is understood that they do not, unless they modify a law already in force there. Yet, if this is so, why did not the famous law of August, 1883, gravely affecting a former law, so apply? Under precisely similar conditions, laws of 1893 and 1894, amending the Press-law, *did* so apply! Then again, did the law of 1896, which declared Madagascar a French colony, automatically bring French laws into operation there? <sup>42</sup> Jurisprudence replies in the affirmative in this case, yet admits that the decision is certainly contrary to the principles governing colonial legislation elsewhere. These are examples taken at random, and the legislative *régime* of the French colonies has many such. As Girault says, “there has been in this matter a veritable anarchy, especially since 1870,” and there are not a few, but numerous, decrees whose legality, to say the least, is dubious.

For these reasons, jurists have stood out against the system from a legal point of view, and the colonial spokesmen, while not so much concerned with its legal absurdity, deprecate it as an anomaly. France has colonies, like Algeria and Indo-China, that are on the verge of securing extensive powers of self-government, yet their legislation is still determined for them by arbitrary decrees. Leroy-Beaulieu, for instance, held that the system, while serving certain purposes when the colonies were in their infancy and required a rapidly acting organization, was an anachronism once a certain stage of growth had been reached. <sup>43</sup> He

<sup>41</sup> Foignet (1925), *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>42</sup> For this important issue in French colonization, see two opposite views in Dislère, *Législation Coloniale* (4th supplement, 1910), p. 11 *et seq.* A good analysis of the problem is in Galliéni, *Rapport sur Madagascar de 1896 à 1905*, Vol. II, p. 316 *et seq.*

<sup>43</sup> P. Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes* (6th edition, 1905), Vol. II, p. 670.

saw in it an inexcusable encroachment of the executive on the legislature and a surrounding of colonial matters with an air of official secrecy. The power of Parliament to intervene in any matter somewhat diminishes the force of the latter contention, but it must be admitted that, despite Parliament's undoubted legal right to intervene, a convention had grown up by which the *ordinary* matters of administration were to be left in the hands of the executive. Leroy-Beaulieu's point was thus practically, if not exactly legally, well taken.

Various concrete proposals have been made to end this antiquated system of decrees. Leroy-Beaulieu, the earliest of the organic reformers, wanted to commence by giving back to Parliament all of its power in connection with colonial legislation, and then, after laying down the main lines of colonial policy, having it delegate the exercise of its powers to the various local authorities. An initial measure of legislative centralization would thus be followed by an administrative decentralization. Girault's solution is somewhat similar. He would also give back Parliament its right to regulate the constitution of the colonies in practice, after which he would allow the central Parliament to intervene only where State finances or questions of general policy were involved, and leave all purely local matters to the governor and council. He holds that a developed colony under a *régime* of decrees is like a civilized community living in tents; and it is indeed pertinent to inquire how a general development is possible so long as there is stagnation in this important matter.

Though the leading specialists and the various colonial Congresses were practically in accord on this point,<sup>44</sup> every attempt to give a practical form to their theories has been checkmated. Most of their proposals were to amend the status of the Antilles, but one proposition in 1895 was to suppress the *régime* of decrees in its entirety.<sup>45</sup> But all met the same fate, and the system goes on as before. Some decrees have been proclaimed twice in the same place: others have not been proclaimed at all, but have been taken as proclaimed,—because they should have been: some laws apply to the colonies, and some do not—even the jurists are uncertain on the matter. Moreover, even if the system were efficient and uniform, it would still be uncalled for. Royal decrees in Holland and Orders-in-Council in Great Britain are comparatively unimportant, yet kindred decrees remain the normal method of legislation for the French colonies, even for Algeria and Indo-China. This question of legislative status is perhaps the best justification for the criticism

<sup>44</sup> E.g. *Compte Rendu du Congrès des Anciennes Colonies*, 1909, paper by Girault, and recommendations, p. 139.

<sup>45</sup> *Journal Officiel*, docts. parl., 1895, Deps., p. 345.

that the French as yet have not started the work of colonial organization, for this is the basic reform, and nothing has been done. France still legislates for colonies as England did in the Plantation era, except that her decrees are thrown out more or less haphazardly, seemingly to produce hair-splitting points of juridical theory. Even the law-commentaries in use in France expose those weaknesses,<sup>46</sup>—a fact which in itself is a good commentary on their obvious nature. France attempts to regulate the affairs of 52½ million people by a *régime* of decrees, and has made no provision for development beyond this stage. In light of these facts, French colonial policy needs little explanation.

### V. Conclusion

The central organization of the French colonies is thus simple. There is the Ministry of the Colonies with its *bureaux*; and, save for the ponderous *Conseil Supérieur* and various lesser Commissions,<sup>47</sup> that is all. The *Bureaux* determine and enforce policy, the only check coming from Parliament, which is extremely averse to touching colonial questions or even securing urgently needed reforms. The French system comes to mean a centralized, permanent bureaucracy, resisting both the institution of lesser services in Paris (on the Messimy plan) and any delegation of its powers to the colonies themselves. It is a static organization, refusing to face the facts of development,—a trait that is most obvious in the increased centralization since 1918. The central body seeks, not to co-ordinate, but to control, and views every concession wrested by the colonies as a backward step.<sup>48</sup> France is in the position that England was in before the Durham Report, and reformers are so engrossed in economic activities that they neglect this lack of vitality in the centre. Though critics of many schools have demonstrated the weakness of this situation, everything goes on as before. Messimy and Viollette showed how there had never been a consistent policy in the sense of adapting the machinery of control to changing circumstances: Jules Harmand pleaded for a Colonial Constitution, with the Ministry superintending instead of executing details: Lucien Hubert deplored the lack of vitality in the central French organizations: and Regismanset showed how the Ministry interrupted colonial development. But change seemed out of

<sup>46</sup> E.g. Mérignhac (1912), p. 317 *et seq.*; Girault (1922), 2.1.197.

<sup>47</sup> These Commissions include a Committee of Public Works (1895), an Archives Commission (1896), a Commission for the Railway and Port of Réunion (1897), an Advisory Council of Litigation (1894), an Advisory Education Committee (1895), Commissions to supervise Colonial Banks (1901), an Advisory Council of Defence (1902), a Permanent Commission of Maritime Affairs (1912), an Inter-Ministerial Commission of Mohammedan Affairs (1911), and others.

<sup>48</sup> J. Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, pp. 236-248.

the question. Regismanset, for instance, claimed that all of the "innovations and reforms" officially favoured by the Ministry may be found in Seignelay or Vauban or Focillon, and are meaningless as applied to twentieth-century conditions!<sup>49</sup>

The trouble commenced when the Colonial Ministry was assimilated to other departments: that decision once taken and stereotyped by French officialdom, any real advance was out of the question, because the *bureaux* were not amenable to the advice of expert Commissions from outside or to any new influences. They had a system, a system of political subordination and economic assimilation, and beyond that, they would not, and do not, go. The events of the war have produced little change, except in the direction of stamping the colonial problem as more national than ever, and thus justifying every administrative *nuance*, every act of subordinating the colonies to France, on the grounds of national emergency. The Paris *bureaux* remain ponderously inert and, even if efficient, quite inadequate, because supported by none of the outside subsidiaries that existed, for instance, in Great Britain and Germany. The French system is one of a self-sufficient officialdom, and as such is mechanical and unprogressive. Therefore, until the various sections of the reorganized *Conseil Supérieur* obtain a vitality *as separate sections*, and until the colonies obtain greater powers of self-government, it is difficult to see how the position is to change. The French colonies, at present lumbering through a doldrum period as the British did in the first forty years of last century, demand a political reformer of the Durham type: so long as reforms are in terms of *mise en valeur* alone, and so long as there are no counter-forces to the *bureaux*, development is impossible. The colonies may enlarge themselves, but they will not, cannot, develop unless the system of control is changed, either in Paris or the colonies or in both.<sup>50</sup>

## VI. The Functionaries and their Training

From the first, the question of officialdom has occupied a leading place in French colonial matters. By the end of the eighties, France had a colonial population of 18 millions, to administer whom, especially in view of the accepted theories of assimilation and direct rule, was no small task. The matter was further complicated by the division of the colonies between three Ministries, because that meant from the outset that a uniform Colonial Service was out of the question. This very division predestined colonial organization to confusion. The officials

<sup>49</sup> C. Regismanset, *Questions Coloniales : 1900-1912*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>50</sup> H. Simon reorganized the central administration in June, 1919 (*L'Asie Française*, April, 1920, p. 112), but essentials remained as before.

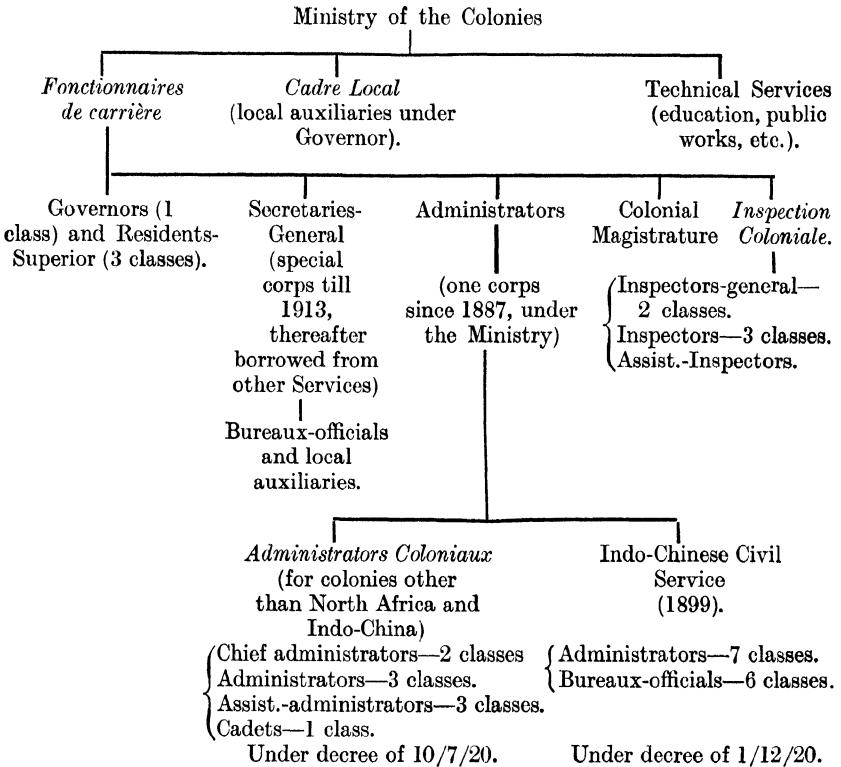
of North Africa were always distinct, those of Algeria being under the Minister of the Interior, and those of Tunisia, and later Morocco, under the Foreign Minister. In other words, unless the principle was accepted that colonial officials were simply to be drawn from the metropolitan services without any special training, it was inevitable that there should be three distinct training systems for them,—with all the needless expense and lack of uniformity that such a division presupposes.

The arrangement of the colonial hierarchy was therefore singularly intricate. The North African officials were aloof from the start, and, even for the other colonies, there was no single Service. In general, there were three classes of functionaries. The most important section included those administrative and judicial officials who intended to spend the whole of their career in the colonies. They were appointed and controlled either by the chief of the State or by the Ministry concerned, and could go from colony to colony as ordered, even from Dahomey to the Marquesas, or from New Caledonia to the Antilles. Aiding them were officials from the *cadre local*—that is, local supernumeraries appointed by the Governor and limited to service in a special colony. But, as if losing no opportunity to complicate matters, France devised intricate arrangements whereby such local officials could be translated to the general service. Quite apart from these two were the technical branches,—education, public works, and the like,—the staffs of which were temporarily borrowed from the metropolitan services. Of these three classes, the first alone—the general officials under the control of the Minister of the Colonies—were functionaries proper, according to the French interpretation of that term as applied to the colonies; and it must be remembered that, just as the term “colonies” in France included but a part of the overseas empire (that outside North Africa), so the term “functionary” in turn was limited to one class of officials,—a curiously artificial manner of dealing with an involved situation.

The position, however, did not end there. The “functionaries” proper did not belong to a single service. There were at least three quite distinct branches. The magistrates and the *service d'inspection* were shorn from the remainder and placed under special *régimes*: and, even within the remnant thus left, further divisions were admitted. After 1898, Indo-China was also severed from the rest of the colonies, from which, of course, Algeria and Tunisia had already been taken.<sup>51</sup> France wanted to set up an *élite* of administrators in this far Eastern colony and, directly inspired by the British organization of the Indian Civil Service, instituted an Indo-Chinese Civil Service, with seven classes

<sup>51</sup> Decree in full in *Les Fonctionnaires Coloniaux*, 1910 (Bibliothèque Coloniale Internationale, 2nd series), Vol. III, p. 326.

COLONIAL OFFICIAL HIERARCHY\*



APPROXIMATE COLONIAL SALARIES (by decrees of 1920)—not including the various bonuses or the “colonial supplement,” which amounts to 90 per cent. in Equatorial Africa, 80 per cent. in the New Hebrides, 70 per cent. in West Africa, Madagascar, Indo-China, and Oceania, 50 per cent. in New Caledonia, and 65 per cent. in the Old Colonies.

Governor-General.—Algeria, 110,000 f.; others, 50,000–55,000 f.

Governor and Resident-Superior (3 classes).—22,000–30,000 f.

Secretary-General.—The rate of salary in the service from which he is borrowed.

Secretary-General’s staff (*Cadre General*).—*Chefs de bureau*, 11,000–16,000 f.

—*Sous-chefs*, 6,000–8,500 f.

Administrators.—Chief, 2 classes, 16,000–19,000 f.

—Ordinary, 3 classes, 11,000–14,000 f.

—Assistant, 3 classes, 7,500–10,000 f.

—Cadets, 6,000 f.

(The Indo-Chinese rates for the last two classes are slightly higher.)

\* Officials of North Africa are not included in the above, but are under the Ministry of the Interior or the Foreign Minister.

of actual administrators and six divisions of clerical officials in the *bureaux*. Elsewhere in the colonies, or rather the dismembered fragments still remaining, there was the one service of "colonial administrators." As reorganized from time to time, these came to include two classes of chief-administrators, three of administrators, three of assistant-administrators, and one of administrative cadets on probation. But the essence of the system lay in the fact that these administrative services, both in Indo-China and elsewhere, were limited in practice to the lesser posts. For the general work of direction, there were two services applying to all of the colonies (except North Africa). The first of these included the Governors and the Residents-Superior, who were for many years graduated according to an intricate system based on the importance of the provinces they administered, but who, since a decree of July, 1921, are now in a uniform class. The Governors are all of the same status and the Residents-General are of three classes, status no longer depending on the provenance of their duties and the importance of the work they were doing. All Class 1 Residents are now equal, whether they control an African kingdom or a stagnant island in the Indian Ocean. To this extent, a desirable simplification has been introduced into the colonial organization.<sup>52</sup>

So far, the system arranged for the minor administrators and for the general heads. But what puzzled France for so long was the gap that still remained,—the difficulty of linking the general government of the colony with the officials in the field. This detail, perhaps more than any other, has caused trouble out of all proportion to its seeming importance. At first, as immediate collaborators of the governors, and as mouthpieces, so to speak, between them and the actual administrators, Ministers of the Interior were set up. But, by reason of certain anomalies, they were suppressed in 1898 and replaced by Secretaries-General, the definition of whose functions certainly made theory more in touch with the realities of the situation. These Secretaries-General constituted a special corps, completely distinct from the other administrators. They were deemed to be specially trained officials, limited to this *liaison*-work. The Secretary-General was an expert, and provided the necessary element of permanence in the administration. Governors came and went at such a bewildering pace that some prominent official had to remain on the spot to look after general interests. Not the least of the Secretary-General's functions was thus to act as interim-Governor, and, in places like Oceania, and at times in Indo-China, more work was accomplished in the intermates than during the official term of the respective Governors. On the other hand, certain difficulties emerged. The Secretaries-General,

<sup>52</sup> Decree of 21/7/21 (in full in Girault, 1922, 2.1.320).

from being the permanent element, become too much so. Their actions tended to become stereotyped, they usurped functions that were not rightfully theirs, and their relationship to the Governors came to cause trouble. Where the personalities of the Governor and the Secretary-General did not harmonize, a deadlock was reached: and it was seen then, for an office where so much depended on co-operation, the Governor should have some part in choosing his main subordinate. In 1913, therefore, France, with a customary preference for a direct reversal of policy in place of a gradual change, abolished the special corps of Secretaries-General at a stroke, and gave the Governor power to name any official—doctor or clerk or engineer or administrator—as his immediate collaborator.<sup>53</sup> As the clerical staff, both local and general, is under the Secretary-General, and as he is in many ways the pivot of the administration, such a decision, paving a way as much for favouritism and the nomination of untrained men as for freedom to appoint vigorous characters, plays no small part in influencing the existing organization of the French colonies. Indeed, the history of French colonial administration might be fully written in terms of the Secretary-Generalship.

At present, then, France has three groups of colonies geographically, three classes of officials within the colonies, and four distinct official services applying to all of the non-Mediterranean colonies, with intricate relationships within and between each of these divisions. The general features of this involved system will be analysed at a later stage: suffice to note here how cumbrous and intricate the general organization is, and how difficult it must of necessity be to secure the application of general rules under such a system of cleavage.

Apart from the customary attacks on official *tracasserie* and *gaspillage*, the problem first attracted notice when the question of training colonial officials assumed an aggravated form. When the colonies were in the military stage before 1870, it was assumed that colonial administrators were the work of Providence rather than of their teachers in France, and that the necessary auxiliary training consisted in imbibing wisdom through the process of watching senior officials in the field. Unfortunately for this theory, however, it did not operate very well in practice, once the colonies had passed the stage of conquest. What happened was that the tyro was forced to fit himself into the military machine and assimilate useless rote that could as easily have been obtained by sojourning for ever at St. Cyr or reading some seventeenth-century treatise on tactics. But when it came to dealing with minute questions of Arab anthropology and of deciding policies that would conform to the principles of native life, something went wrong. The traditional lore

<sup>53</sup> Foignet (1925), *op. cit.*, p. 235 *et seq.*

of the militarists no longer seemed constructive,—a fact which soon became evident even to the conservative expansionists. Consequently, the question of colonial training became a much-discussed issue during the eighties, although, practically to the end of the century, the dominant note was that of the old school, which denied the necessity of any training except the practical observation in the field of one's superiors in the official hierarchy, the importance of the information gained being in direct proportion to seniority. In these days, summed up a French expert, senility was usually a guarantee for experience in the colonial world.

The actual reforms in this direction thus came to be the work—and the much-despised work—of a minority, as colonial reforms usually were in France. Briefly speaking, it was the new factors that entered in the late eighties that forced the rate of change. The French Empire had grown so enormously that the former haphazard methods no longer sufficed. At the Colonial Congress of 1889, Isaac was not certain of the methods that should be employed, but what he did know was that “France had to have a policy.”<sup>54</sup> Even the most martial observer saw that colonial administration was no longer limited to military conquest: more and more, the phrase, “native policy,” was intruding itself, and was seen to involve exceptionally difficult and quite new problems. Under these conditions, a careful observation of the problems and a special training to meet them were alike inevitable; and France was forced by the relentless pressure of facts into training her colonial officials. Luckily, the previous system was revealing its faults at this very moment. Indo-China, with its favouritism and inept officialdom, was a known scandal: the Antilles were little better: Algeria reeked of *refoulement*, with all of the official weaknesses that this was known to cover; and the Pacific colonies were travesties of efficiency. “For a long time,” a legal treatise summed up rather reservedly, “the recruitment of colonial functionaries did not take place with all the care and selection needed. Instead of sending to the colonies experts trained for their task by a special preparation, the French made the colonies receptacles for the elements unwanted at home,”<sup>55</sup>—those who left their country for their country's good.

The need was thus evident, and became more pressing every moment when France moved onwards in Tunisia, Indo-China and West Africa in these years, and was thinking of going to Madagascar and penetrating inland from the Congo to the Nile. Colonial officials were needed as never before, both in quantity and quality: and the country certainly

<sup>54</sup> *Recueil des Délibérations du Congrès Colonial National, 1889–1890, Vol. 1, p. 15.*

<sup>55</sup> Mérygnac (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 446. Cp. Girault, 1922, 2.1.347.

had to take some steps to meet the situation. But the question was: In what direction could she move? How *could* colonial officials be trained? Many, perhaps most, of the experts were inclined to follow the English model.<sup>56</sup> The Indian Civil Service, with its competitive examination and its practical experience acquired during the period of probation, was eagerly studied in France in the eighties and accepted as unquestionably the ideal system. Its application to the French problem, however, was another matter. It was cynically stated that, if a system of examination, and especially a system as strict as that for India, were applied to the French colonial service, the colonies would have to administer themselves! The trouble was that the French despised the colonies, especially because a colonial appointment at that time was a euphemism for labelling its recipient as a failure at home. A man with a promise of a career would not stoop to the colonies, unless, of course, he were a soldier. That is why French civil officials in the colonies were for so long of a low type, and why France found the problem so difficult in the late eighties, especially when anti-colonialism, sharpened by the Ferry fights of 1884-1885, was still so rampant.

Under these conditions, the British system as pursued in India could obviously not apply. As an alternative, France had two examples from which to argue. The Dutch had for long had a colonial school to train their officials for the Javanese colonies. Their "Administrative Academy of the East Indies" was directly the French model and must be recognized as the pioneer establishment for the training of colonial officials.<sup>57</sup> The Dutch system, of securing tribute through Residents controlling the Rajahs from behind the scenes, was one dependent on the utmost efficiency, and thus, by its very nature, necessitated an elaborate and specialized training. Reinforcing this experience, France had a somewhat similar institution within her own colonies. In Indo-China, where untrained officials wrought more havoc at that time than in any other French possession, there had been a "*Collège des Stagiaries*" since 1874. This had been instituted at Saigon by Luro, that official who alone had carefully studied Annamite organization and whose works protested against the ignorance of French administrators in destroying native customs.<sup>58</sup> On a small scale, his results had been very favourable and had shown that the Dutch model could easily be extended to the French sphere of action.

<sup>56</sup> Chailley-Bert's report in *Institut Colonial International. Compte Rendu*, 1895 session, p. 272, or J. Chailley-Bert, *Dix Années de Politique Coloniale* (1902), p. 127. Compare E. Boutmy, *Le Recrutement des Administrateurs Coloniaux* (1895).

<sup>57</sup> *Les Fonctionnaires Coloniaux* (1910), *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 116 *et seq.*; Report of Colonial Congress of 1889, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 91.

<sup>58</sup> Report of Colonial Congress of 1889, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

A decree of November 23, 1889, therefore set up the *École Coloniale* in Paris, to train students who wished to take up colonial appointments. The astonishing feature of its early years was the antagonism it had to fight down. Even the "colonials," a limited body as they were in the France of Ferry and Etienne, were largely opposed to it,—a fact which may perhaps be explained by the fact that their ranks were composed mainly of retired soldiers and officials who were not inclined to admit the necessity of any training beyond the one they themselves had undergone. The Colonial Congress of 1889, for instance, was strongly opposed to the new principle. Many of its members held that the old method of practical training was far the better and that the recruit had to learn by experience, even if his charges suffered somewhat in the process! The Congress actually considered at length a proposition to abolish the new-fangled *École Coloniale* altogether<sup>59</sup>; and it must be remembered that this Congress was one of specialists, and perhaps the most important ever held in France, because, by adopting the principle of assimilation in all its branches, it decided the bases of French policy for many years. Even though the extremist proposition was not accepted, the Congress adopted the view that the new *École Coloniale* should not have any monopoly of recruitment and that all of the old channels should remain open. Finally, as if to leave no doubt of its opinion, the Congress expressed the view that "for certain colonies and certain careers, the *École Coloniale* is so constituted that, instead of realizing the desired end, its influence will probably be rather bad!"<sup>60</sup> The new school, therefore, had a hard and long fight, especially when the African militarists were so triumphant throughout the nineties and when officials continued to be appointed by the same old methods of favouritism.

The *École Coloniale* itself was organized on the principle of affording a certain basic instruction to all pupils alike and then adding to this a specialized training for the particular career the student wished to adopt. At first it had sections for Africa, Indo-China, the penal service, and the commissariat,—a somewhat curious division, especially in view of the absence of any special training for the most important colonial field, that of Northern Africa! This organization was to meet the needs of the new Empire, that conquered since 1885, and it was brought up to date by an important decree of February, 1902, which changed several emphases to take into account the results of the wars of the nineties.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Report of Colonial Congress of 1889, Vol. I, p. 85 *et seq.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 93; Vol. II, pp. 47-48.

<sup>61</sup> *Les Fonctionnaires Coloniaux*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I (1897), p. 97 *et seq.*; Vol. III (1910), p. 259 *et seq.*, for the various decrees.

Under the system thus set up, students entered the School by a competitive examination and attended a two-years' course. It was understood that, while they were receiving their special colonial training, they were to obtain their law-licence,—the examination for which necessitated a training in civil and commercial law, civil procedure, and financial legislation. While doing this, they were to pass the special examinations of the *École Coloniale*, both the general course which everybody had to take and the course pertaining to their own career, whether African or Indo-Chinese or penal. Both of these courses were spread over the two years. For example, as modified to 1909, the general course included French colonial policy, French colonial economics, and "colonial productions" in the first year, and, in the second, five important subjects, the range of which remains the best testimony to French versatility in the colonial field. Having studied the details of French colonization in the first year, the students in the second had to pass examinations in foreign colonial policy, the *mise en valeur* of foreign colonies, the administrative organization of French colonies, colonial administrative law, elements of colonial anthropology, topography, and administrative *comptabilité*<sup>62</sup>—and this in an age when comparative studies, economic emphasis, and the importance of anthropology were all practically unrecognized by other colonial Powers! The "general course" at the *École Coloniale* in Paris remains one of the most important contributions France has made to colonial policy, and cannot be too highly praised. Indeed, France's position, even in 1902, may challenge comparison in this regard with Great Britain's to-day!

Side by side with the general course were the specialized trainings. That of Indo-China, for instance, included detailed studies of the geography, institutions and administration of the country; instruction in Annamite, Cambodian and Thai; and the reading of the customary Annamite and Chinese pieces. That of North Africa dealt with the geography and administration of the seaboard States and then with Moslem law and the Arabian and Malagasian languages, and ensured that the young official should know something of the special problems with which he would have to cope. As conditions changed from time to time, the special sections were transformed. Thus, the anomalous and over-emphasized commissariat section was changed; a special section for the colonial magistrature was set up in 1905; the commercial section with its single year's training went in 1913; a special section for North Africa, long overdue as it was, was inaugurated in 1914; and, finally, preparatory and native sections were introduced.

Having secured his law-licence and passed both the general and

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263 *et seq.*

special sections of the *École Coloniale*, the student obtains his brevet and is ready for the period of probation which he must undertake at the outset of his actual life-work. That is, the French system does not substitute an institutional training for the period of cadetship that the Indian Civil Service knows, as is commonly supposed: it first of all gives the training in the *École Coloniale* and then insists on the probationary period of one or two years in addition. Each year a certain number of places are reserved for the students in the central administration, the colonial magistrature, the administrative corps of both Indo-China and the colonies in general, the Indo-Chinese customs, and even should they so desire, in the office-staffs of the Secretaries-General and the "general administration." But, as the *cadre general*, that is the clerical side, is of a lower status and has only forty-five functionaries in all, as compared with the administrative branch's 941, most go to the latter, for which, of course, their training is especially designed.<sup>63</sup> It seems a needless waste to join the ranks of the clerks who are selected by an ordinary examination from a far wider field. The above-quoted numbers, however, do not include the "crack" colonial service, that of Indo-China, which is quite distinct and which is also open to students of the School. The average student, therefore, secures an administrative cadetship, either in the general body or in the specialized Indo-Chinese branch, and, after a successful period of probation, either for one or two years, receives an appointment as third-class assistant-administrator, nearly half of whose ranks are specifically reserved for him. It will be noted that the *École Coloniale* has no monopoly of appointments at any stage: it would be very difficult to conceive a French colonial system where there was not an opening for patronage! At every stage, untrained officials may, and do, enter, both at the bottom and more particularly as one ascends the ladder, at the top of which, it is little exaggeration to say, the places are reserved for political appointments.

In so far as it goes, however, the French system of training is an admirable one. The Dutch, by the nature of things, is more specialized and unitary, because they have only the one set of colonial problems with which to cope, so that, for scope, the French remains unrivalled. Germany for her colonies relied on borrowing as far as possible from the metropolitan services and had no central Colonial School, although a certain degree of training was afforded at the School of Oriental Languages, the School of Commerce, and the Hamburg Colonial Institute.<sup>64</sup> England was the least progressive of the nations in this regard, notwithstanding the urgency of her needs. Her services were recruited in the main by

<sup>63</sup> Girault (1922), 2.1.330, 349.

<sup>64</sup> *Les Fonctionnaires Coloniaux* (1920), *op. cit.*, p. 143 *et seq.*

examination from the Universities, but no special training in colonial problems was given, save during the period when the applicant was a cadet on probation, and there was no adequate training in anthropology, either practical or theoretical,—a state of affairs that needs no comment.

On the other hand, it would be unwise to rhapsodize unduly over the French position, which, admirable as it is in many ways, is by no means the perfect solution of the problem. It contains many weaknesses. The courses at the School are overburdened with that study of the legal side of administration which has always characterized French colonialism. French colonial treatises, for instance, are really legal commentaries, and the official training is largely of this kind. As a corollary, the training tends to be largely academic in its nature. For instance, there is much commentary on the origins of Mohammedanism, little on the practical policy (perhaps because it is so difficult to define!) that France adopts towards Islam. Similarly, living languages tend to become subordinated to studies of the past, and native institutions examined in the detached manner of archæology, rather than as something vital and living. Many of the courses have little vitality, and, however admirable they would be in a research University (in the adjacent School of Oriental Studies, for instance), might with advantage be replaced by more practical studies in an institution whose sole function is the training of officials. The moral of this was best pointed in Indo-China, where, despite the emphasis on the teaching of languages in the early years of this century, very few of the administrators spoke the tongue of the innermost tribes. Thai, Cambodian, and Annamite figured prominently in the courses of the *École Coloniale* and in various alarmed decrees of the Ministry: but, on the spot, administrators depended on interpreters, one episode in *Les Sauterelles* having a real application to the colonial world. During the rising in the play (and Fabre was drawing on the actual events of the previous six years in Indo-China), the Tmer troops were left without interpreters and ("The imbeciles! We've been thirty-five years in their country and they still can't speak our language!" said one of the characters) the Director of the School of Oriental Studies was appealed to. "But I don't know Tmer! I know Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan and even ancient Tmer, but not the present spoken language!" In much the same spirit, a graduate of the *École Coloniale* might very well know more about the Moslem commentaries of the fifth century (have not the researches of the Director, M. Hardy, so clearly revealed these things?), but not quite as much about the more or less abortive attempts to codify Moslem law so that it would conform, at least to some degree, to the needs of the situation of to-day.

It is all a matter of direction, and one may ponder whether the elaborate lecture-courses which are periodically plastered over the walls in the Avenue de l'Observatoire for the delectation of the nursemaids of the Luxemburg are as useful to the embryonic administrators going out to the Upper Niger or to Laos, as they are for revealing the erudition of the staff! Nevertheless, this is a question of detail, and it may safely be said that the French accomplishment, its obvious faults notwithstanding, far outrivals that of the other colonial Powers. France alone has systematically attacked the problem of training her colonial officials, and the courses given undoubtedly make the student cognizant of the details of the administrative *régime* and leave him with that basis with which he can continue his observations from the point at which the Delafosses and Vignons and Hardys leave off. He can, so to speak, attach his training to the problems he encounters, and modify that training to cope with the problems. Under the British system, to the contrary, the new official has either to fall into the administrative rut or attack his problem in a purely empirical manner. The French educational system and the nature of French officialdom being what they are, the courses at the *École Coloniale* represent a conspicuous triumph,—one of those touches of mystery that, from time to time, have transmuted the drabness of their colonial effort.

France thus has a body of colonial officials partly trained at the *École Coloniale* and partly enlisted by various means—examination or nomination (with everything that nomination includes)—from outside. The resultant mixture is peculiarly French. The colonies, especially before the reorganization of 1920–1922, were deluged with these mixed classes of officials, and the French system came to have three distinct characteristics. It provided a wonderfully good training for some of its permanent officials: it adulterated this leaven by the addition of untrained favourites and especially by a proletariat of European officials who performed functions that practically every other colonial Power left in the hands of native auxiliaries: and it arbitrarily allotted the highest posts to politicians,—not, be it noted, such decorative Governorships as the British Dominions have, but directly administrative posts. In Indo-China, for instance, each Governor-General was a politician, some without any previous colonial experience, even that gained by discussing the budgets in Parliament.

The defects of such a mixed system have always been noticeable. The colonies, without exception, have had far too many functionaries,—that is the first feature of the scheme. It is estimated, for instance, that France employs three European officials where England has one. In Cochin-China, there were eighty-six high officials in 1910 for an area

and population for which British India had fifteen!<sup>65</sup> Indo-China had one European official to every 7,900 people; the Dutch in Java, one to 76,000! In all, Indo-China had 5,683 functionaries in 1911, mostly performing routine details that could have safely been left to natives far more backward than the Annamites. The minor officials received from £250 to £500 yearly and, without exception, did work that the British and Dutch left to natives.<sup>66</sup> As Messimy reported in his budget-speech in 1910, "it would appear from the budget that one was concerned more with discovering work for the officials to do than in finding suitable officials for the work!" In consequence, no less than a third of the general and a half of the local budgets went for the payment of officials! And this in a country whose natives had a traditional capacity for the art of administration! Nor did the expense end with salaries. A third of the total *personnel* was always on leave, the remaining two-thirds were devising new methods of expenditure. All had articles of every conceivable kind provided at the State's expense—a report of 1905, for instance, while not objecting to the provision of the ordinary illustrated reviews, added with a telling lack of comment that "the supplementary list is suggestive,—*Ma Chemise brûle* side by side with *La Carrière de Lucette*, and *Sacré Porlut* with the *Memoirs of Mademoiselle Flore!*"<sup>67</sup> Even a long-suffering inspector felt constrained to point this out. The colonies seemed to exist partly as a haven for officials, and there was little difference in this regard between Tahiti, Indo-China, and the Antilles, although climatic conditions made the state of affairs in West and Equatorial Africa a little different.

With this excessive *personnel* and wasteful expenditure went a chronic instability. Officials were constantly changing: that is why the *régime de l'interimat* came to be described as the French method of governing her colonies. Cochinchina had forty Governors in forty-one years, Annam thirty in twenty-six years, Tonkin twenty-eight in twenty-six years, Tahiti forty in thirty years, Algeria fifty-one in fifty-two years. An official might go from Senegal to New Caledonia and thence to Madagascar within three or four years! Under such conditions, continuity of policy, and still more, reforms suitable to the situation, were practically out of the question. When a Governor retained his post for a number of years, therefore, he was an exception. Doumer's greatest service in Indo-China it was said, although he really created the country, was to have lasted for five years! Not till a decree of July, 1921, was a Governor's tenure in any way certain. After that date, five years was to be the

<sup>65</sup> Messimy, *Notre Œuvre Coloniale* (1910), p. 144; Harmand (1910), *op. cit.*, pp. 217-219.

<sup>66</sup> F. Bernard, *L'Indo-Chine* (1901), p. 43; A. Métin, *L'Indo-Chine et l'Opinion* (1916), pp. 97, 106-107. <sup>67</sup> Quoted in Messimy (1910), *op. cit.*, p. 148.

normal period, but, until then, arbitrary changes were the rule rather than the exception.

At present, the position has been somewhat improved. A Governor, though still subject to recall, has a certain security of tenure under normal conditions; payment is regularized throughout the empire; and officials are classified according to their status, irrespective, in the main, of the geographical situation of the colony they may chance to be in.<sup>68</sup>

But these reforms only touch the outskirts of the problem and serve more to draw attention to the existing abuses than anything else. The French official world in the colonies still stands in need of radical reforms. The most obvious need is to infuse some order into the administration. It is too much to expect that the official hierarchies of the three North African States shall be made to correspond with those of the colonies proper, but, within the colonies, it is surely anomalous to have the existing distinction between Indo-China and what can only be described as "the rest minus North Africa."

Against this it is asserted that the Indo-Chinese service, the "crack" corps, represents something special and should not be touched. But this is a confused line of thought. The Indo-Chinese organization, since its reconstruction in 1899 and 1920, is certainly more progressive than the remainder, but that is because it stands for specialization,—a principle that might well be extended to all of the colonies. There is a need, as experts admit, of stabilizing the official world, but that is only possible by way of specialization.<sup>69</sup> The British system of allowing officials to obtain local knowledge by a protracted sojourn in one place, as in India, and even to spend the whole of their career within one country, is the one, *par excellence*, adapted to the French colonial world, between the different parts of which there is so little similarity. The specialization of the Indo-Chinese service since 1889 is therefore a move in the right direction, the institution of a special North African section at the *École Coloniale* in 1914 another. But it is inconceivable that the Empire should be allowed to resolve itself, as it has done, into Indo-China, versus North Africa, versus "the rest," with a few services extending to all colonies, as a change. If the overlapping services were removed, and if the Indo-Chinese model were extended to West Africa and Madagascar, and specialized officials attached to each of the four services thus set up, the French colonial organization, so far as its officials were concerned, would know some order. In other words, the present sections, known as the *administrateurs coloniaux* and the *cadre général des Secrétaires-généraux*, whose members can be sent anywhere, must be replaced by

<sup>68</sup> Decrees of 10/7/20, 1/12/20, and 21/7/21.

<sup>69</sup> Mérygnac (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 378.

localized bodies,—a transformation which would increase both simplicity and efficiency. It is only in this way that the language difficulty can be solved, or that a *rapprochement* with native needs and interests can be secured. The only generalized service would then be the *service d'inspection*, and to that, as has been seen, special conditions must of necessity apply, if it is to perform its functions.

With this must go some amelioration of the present position as it concerns the higher officials. Presumably, the politician-Governors have to remain (and it must not be forgotten that the introduction of such outside blood at times, as with Doumer and Sarraut and Long in Indo-China, means a fresh outlook and vigorous reform), but, for the mass, purely ornamental functions would seem to suffice, if there *has* to be some colonial drain for the by-products of French politics. The English system in this regard, though often irritating to the colonies, never becomes a menace, as does the French, because their Governors have little actual power. But, with the French, it is different. In the Indo-Chinese Civil Service, for instance, prize administrative corps of France though it is, the body is in the main a closed service only until the important posts are reached. But is there any reason why, the control from Paris being as extensive and immediate as it is, even these posts too should not be closed? The problem of affording ultimate employment for the man who makes colonial administration his career has not really been solved by France. Governors have usually been appointed for purely political or personal reasons. Doumer and Long, turbulent Radicals, were thus banished to do their worst in Indo-China. Where this did not apply, the Governors were usually soldiers, like Galliéni or Lyautey. There is only one outstanding instance of a comparatively young *gouverneur de carrière*,—van Vollenhoven, appointed to West Africa in his early thirties. Usually, the Indo-Chinese model applied,—a Governor was a politician sent out, either to clear the air of metropolitan politics a little or to reverse a previously applied policy. This accounts for the absence of any uniform policy in most French colonies, and for that alternation of uncalled-for changes and a complete somnolence which has summed up most of French colonial efforts. And this position still applies. The French have an admirable system of training their young officials, but have not yet reached the stage when the higher posts are filled by a selective movement upwards from the ranks of these trained men. The account of the various Governors in *Les Sauterelles* is thus more than satire: it is history, and, as has been said, the French aggravate their offence by giving power as well as position to these *hauts exils*.

With this general cleansing movement towards a millennium in the

colonial hierarchy (a movement as unattainable as a millennium, it is to be feared) could go a reform of the method of recruitment. Instead of the present system, which offers graduates of the *École Coloniale* a good chance and then swamps them with untrained but influential outsiders, the entry to the colonial service could be made uniform. The gates of the *École Coloniale* should be the only avenue to go in. Deserving individuals from the other services in the colonies might still be chosen as at present, save that, instead of being promoted at once, they would be sent to the School for a preliminary training. Otherwise, if the existing system continues, the advantages of a training at the *École Coloniale* must tend to become minimized, and such a policy is naturally self-annulling.

Lastly, and perhaps most immediate, is the need of providing scope for natives, and, at the same time, removing the cumbrous European proletariat in the colonies. A start was made in this direction by a decree of December, 1920, which reorganized the Indo-Chinese services in such a manner as to leave more and more posts for the natives; but the provision at the *École Coloniale* for them is still too circumscribed, and there is little outlet for the higher-educated natives, say, in Indo-China and Algeria. But France does not admit the need of many native auxiliaries and does not recognize the worth of those she has. In Algeria, for instance, of 849 sheikhs, 739 receive less than £100 a year, and, even in the idyllic existence with which romanticists surround these much-maligned native auxiliaries, a sheikh with a harem of fifteen members and the necessity of entertaining numerous visitors of note must find it difficult on £2 a week! Only one native *adjoind* in Algeria receives more than £200 a year, the average being a few pounds a month.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, in Indo-China, a native secretary received little more than a pound a week, and even a *Tong-Doc*, a Governor of a Province, £100 a year! But France claimed that she could not be accused of illiberality, because, in Indo-China, she treated the Indian immigrants from the five towns as Europeans (probably because they had a vote while the mandarins did not!), even to the extent of allowing them six-months' furlough every five years,—to recuperate from the Asiatic climate!<sup>71</sup>

At present, France has an empire of 55 million people, yet has made little effort to solve the problem of utilizing native officials. Algeria was assimilated; Indo-China deluged with nearly 6,000 European officials; West Africa ruled directly and with the Nigerian model specifically banned, in so far as the employment of natives for important posts was concerned; and the old colonies were filled with officials on

<sup>70</sup> Ibn Habilas, *L'Afrique Française vue par un Indigène* (1914), pp. 47-50.

<sup>71</sup> P. Doumer, *L'Indo-Chine Française* (1905), p. 75.

the best French models : but Tunisia and Morocco were there to demonstrate the advantages of employing native subsidiaries. Such a utilization meant increased efficiency, it was cheaper, and it lessened native discontent, both by lowering the burden of taxation and by offering a visible field of progress to the natives. But the natural French *penchant* towards direct administration and the necessity of finding employment for so many officials from home combined in the opposite direction ; and the problem remains unsolved, discontent in Algeria, Tunisia, and Indo-China increasing the while.

The French official hierarchy thus remains one of paradoxes. In some ways it is the most expertly trained in the world, in others the most riddled by patronage. It lacks a definite organization and is confused in every conceivable way, each successive set of reforms, that of 1920-1921 for instance, raising a crop of new problems, so long as the fundamental bases remain unchanged. There are too many officials ; the lower ranks are not sufficiently paid ; they impose too great a charge on the local budgets ; and opportunity and initiative are both minimized by the confusion. It has always been said that the French colonies were in the grip of a bureaucratic octopus : budget-reformers for the last twenty years have pointed out the faults of the system and have reiterated their demands so frequently and so identically that the listeners are wearied : every successive reformer is at accord at least on this point : and the system has been attacked and satirized *ad nauseam*. Its faults are evident to all, yet it still continues. It simply extends to another field and in a particularly acute form those notorious evils of officialdom which pertain in France itself, and which everybody recognizes and nobody seems able to change. Under the conditions, it would be little exaggeration to modify the creed of the old *Pacte Colonial* and say of France that " a colony is made what it is by and for the officials." But, after all, from half to two-thirds of each local budget is left for other purposes than paying officials, even if the interest on loans previous officials have contracted has first to be met !



PART II

FRENCH COLONIAL THEORY IN  
PRACTICE



## CHAPTER VI

### ALGERIA

#### I. The Period of Origin : 1830–1880

ALGERIA was France's first and greatest experiment in her second Colonial Empire, and, almost from the outset, was important not only in itself but as shaping the country's general colonial policy. Unwelcome at first and not really arousing enthusiasm in France till the eighties, it was the testing-ground of French policies, and an experimental station in every field of activity,—general administration, economic policy, native problems, and even, because of the connection with a militant Islam, international problems in the period after 1870. So naturally, the country came to occupy an especial position : it was never a colony, and was never counted among the other colonies : even to-day this position remains and explains why it is practically impossible to obtain statistics covering the whole French Empire. Algeria has always been looked on as a prolongation of France, separated from France by a geographical accident of thirty hours of sea, but otherwise an integral portion of the mainland, and yet differentiated from a group of mainland *départements* by being a kind of laboratory for wider experiments unknown in France itself. The truth is that Algeria has always presented a case *sui generis* : it has not been a colony as the French view colonies, it is not a part of France under mainland conditions. Therefore it has aptly been called " a mixed colony," a colony half of settlement and half of *exploitation*, but with certain additional factors pertaining to neither of these types. But the best commentary on the anomalous situation of Algeria is that it is under the Minister of the Interior, yet has a distinct tariff *régime*. It is a piece of Islam thrust within the European orbit and looking, not towards the centre of Africa, but northwards, and with its difficulties partly lessened but mostly increased by its proximity to the French mainland. At the outset these confused characteristics best explain why Algeria's history has, for a century, been largely one of contradictions and futilities, with policies inapplicable to any colony and suicidal for a Moslem population. Algeria has been a synonym for confusion in French colonial annals, and, by reason of its

inordinate influence on colonial policy in general, has thus largely aided the anti-colonial cause.

The one fixed feature of the situation throughout the century has been geography, which was in no small degree the determinant of policy,—militarists on the spot and theorists in Paris notwithstanding. Algeria proper lies north of the desert, that is, north of the meridian through Biskra: south of that is the Sahara, the land of the raiding Touareg, geographically distinct. Algeria itself is a double ridge of mountains between the desert and the sea. The Maritime Atlas and the Saharan Atlas traverse the country laterally, and form a big double backbone. Between them is the plateau region of the Shott (the *Hauts Plateaux*), a steppe country too dry for agriculture and suitable only for scattered pasture, a forbidding land which is a fit portal of the desert. It is in the most northerly strip, the thin wedge of plain between the Maritime Atlas and the Mediterranean, that the wealth of the country lies and that settlement has always been concentrated, especially in the wealthy Mitijda region round Algiers itself. This coastal strip further subdivides into the provinces of Oran, Algiers, and Constantine, each of which has its distinct characteristics. Oran is the poor dry section next to Morocco, with inert natives more prone to the forces of religious suggestion than elsewhere, but with the compensation of adequate supplies of Spanish and Moroccan labourers. At the other extremity, on the Tunisian border, is Constantine, a high forested plateau-region, with a people industrious but, because of the ruggedness of their country, more warrior-like and more independent than elsewhere: consequently, this section is less suitable for outside colonization than the other two. Far more important than these two extremities is the central province, Algiers itself, for, just as the colony of Algeria narrows down to the northern fringe, so in turn the north, to all intents and purposes, becomes the central province of Algiers,—the region centring on the Mitijda plain, and the most densely settled part of Algeria. This is a land of exuberant vigneron and herders, with hard-working Kabyles further back, and further back still the harsh mountain tribes. But it is the black earth of the province that makes Algeria, and on this the occupation has focused from the first.<sup>1</sup>

Before 1870, Algeria had practically no record of success, as far as the French were concerned. The country was occupied during a fit of *ennui* when the Bourbon Government of Charles X attempted to distract the people's attention from maladministration at home, or more particularly the uninteresting boredom of that administration, by filling their eyes with the sight of glamorous foreign adventures in an exotic

<sup>1</sup> V. Piquet, *La Colonisation française dans l'Afrique du Nord* (1912), chap. 1.

Eastern setting. The famous *coup d'éventail*, the blow given the French Consul in Alger by the Dey, had little to do with the situation, because it was by no means an isolated or even the worst of similar incivilities : more to the point was the question of the conflict between the French Government and the Jewish banking-house of Bacri and Busnach, who were the veritable rulers of Algeria : and aiding this trend was the effect of Moorish piracy on Mediterranean trade.

A passing craze for *la gloire* and a permanent economic evil thus led France to Algeria<sup>2</sup> ; but, once there, she wanted to leave, and vacillated for decades. Only the Midi deputies (the commercialists) and the strategists wanted to remain, and even these were not concerned with the occupation of the interior of the land. Indeed, until 1840, it was not the pseudo-expansionists so much as the agrarians, the successors of the Physiocrats and localists to the core, who decided the destiny of Algeria, and who were supported by the serried ranks of the economists under Passy.<sup>3</sup> It is true that the decision of a Commission of Inquiry in 1834 resulted in the maintenance of the conquest, but only half-heartedly. What Algeria meant to the mass of French statesmen was a perpetual war with Abd-el-Kader for an ultimate victory which would aid nothing except French prestige, and that only to a dubious extent : economically, there was nothing to hope for, for was it not known that the only plentiful thing in this desert was air, and even that foul ?<sup>4</sup>

Under these conditions, the surprising feature is, not that it took France thirty years to get to Kabylie, but that she ever got there at all. Until 1847, Abd-el-Kader was in revolt : his defeat gave France the Tell plains and the Algerian plateaux, but Kabylie, the mountain-land guarding the interior, was not occupied till 1857, and even then, there had been little consolidation of the occupied area and not the slightest economic advance. For thirty years the efforts of the French in Algeria had been limited to a barren use of force ; and, to 1869, the land had cost the lives of 150,000 soldiers and an equal number of colonists, and there was little to show for the wastage.<sup>5</sup>

In the interim the bright spot was Bugeaud's command (1841-1847), a period which was fruitful in colonization experiments. *Père Bugeaud*, the *Petit Caporal* of Algeria, was a curious blend of farmer and soldier,

<sup>2</sup> For detailed analysis of these events, see Esquer, *Les Commencements d'un Empire. La Prise d'Alger* (1923), p. 66 *et seq.*, or C. Rousset, *Conquête d'Alger* (1879), p. 30 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> R. Valet, *L'Afrique du Nord devant le Parlement au XXme Siècle* (1926), pp. 18-23.

<sup>4</sup> For details of this opposition, see C. Rousset, *Les Commencements d'une Conquête : L'Algérie de 1830 à 1840* (1887), Vol. I, p. 162 *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> Ferry Report (*Le Gouvernement de l'Algérie*), 1892, p. 400.

with the instincts of a practical Périgord agriculturist and a weapon of 100,000 soldiers. These two assets he strove to combine in the form of "military colonization," but, because his military training led him to over-emphasize the influence of force, and because his Périgord days had bred in him a definite mistrust of outside capital, the scheme failed; and the credit of three million francs which he demanded in 1847 was abruptly refused.<sup>6</sup> However, he made the first genuine attempt to solve the problem of Algerian settlement, and his experiments were of evolutionary importance, not only because of the lessons from their failure, but because the positive benefits of the scheme played a large part in shaping the trend of later policy. Moreover, his policy of co-operating with the Arabs was half a century in advance of his era and opened up new avenues of thought. But he was ruined by his somewhat mixed reputation, by his over-great self-confidence, and by his ultimate reversion to the force that he had at first stood out against. Bugeaud was at the parting of the ways: in a military age and with a military weapon, he attempted to introduce economic and native reforms, suitable for a progressive civil government; and, not unnaturally, he fell between his weapons and his goals. He was attempting an impossible task, but the very attempt shortened the period of transition to that stage in which the reforms that he fought for would be made practicable. Modern Algeria owes no little of its development to *Père Bugeaud*, and it is no exaggeration to say that he was as successful in determining ultimate policy as he was a failure in his immediate task. Moreover, at the very least, he achieved the conquest of the land up to the mountains of Kabylie.

After Bugeaud, the only unconventional spot in Algeria's history was Napoleon III's dabbling with the idea of an "Arab Kingdom." When his policy of exploiting the natives had become irksomely monotonous, he issued his famous letter of February 6, 1863, to Governor Pélissier,<sup>7</sup> to the effect that "Algeria is not, properly speaking, a colony, but an Arab Kingdom," and, as such, had to evolve along the line of native hegemony. Therefore, he turned from aiding the colonists (of what use were colonists, it was argued, when most of them died?) to restoring the Arabs to a fair position. *Cantonnement*, or the forcing-back of the natives to provide land for settlement, was abandoned, and the collective property of the Arabs recognized and divided among the numerous family groups (1863).

However, the upshot was failure. Napoleon, entranced for the

<sup>6</sup> H. Ideville, *Le Maréchal Bugeaud*, Vol. III, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> There were two such letters, the first and more famous to Pélissier, "Lettre sur la politique française en Algérie" of 6/2/63, on government; and the second, that of 20/6/65 to Marshal MacMahon, on justice.

nonce by the Arabs, had neglected the far more useful Kabylie mountaineers as rude peasants, and the natives, fiery democratic agriculturists as they were, responded to this treatment by the rising of 1864 in Oran and Kabylie. Locusts in 1866, drought in 1867, and cholera in 1868 completed the cycle of disaster; but Napoleon's interest had waned long before this; and Algeria drifted, with a discouraged settler-class, a declining native population, a clearly inadequate military government, and economic distress everywhere,—in short, a palpable failure. So obvious was the *débâcle* that the *Corps Législatif* sent a Commission of Inquiry in 1869, which recommended a complete change of methods and organization, and in particular a return to that civil government which had been tried between 1858 and 1860.<sup>8</sup> This change came about in May, 1870, so that the decisive step in Algerian reorganization had been taken *before* the proclamation of the French Republic, and it is therefore completely erroneous (although usual) to attribute the commencement of modern Algeria to the revolution of 1870. The disease had been investigated, the symptoms diagnosed, and the prescription decided upon, before that event.

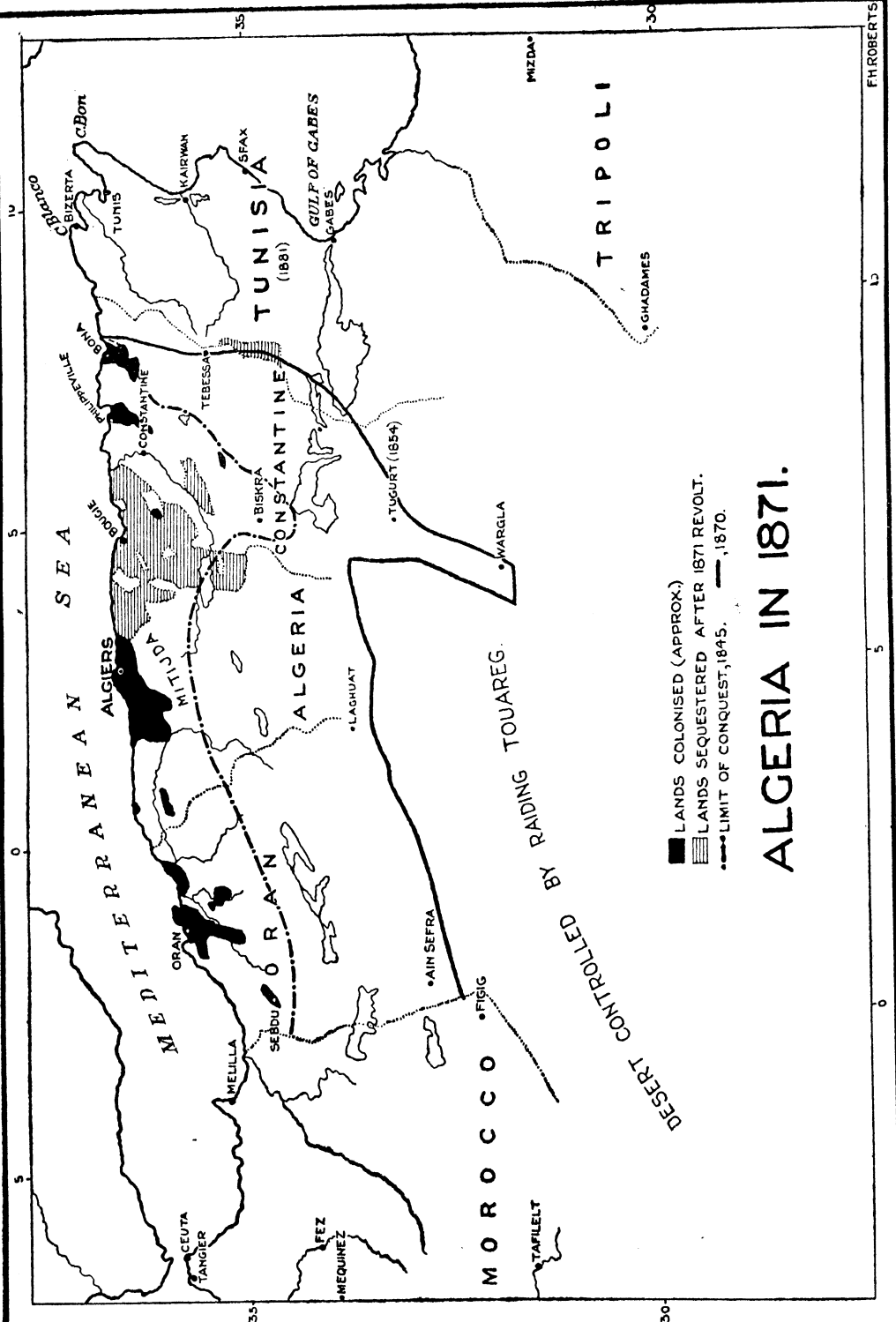
Nevertheless, in 1871, the Republic had to face the accumulated arrears of forty years of failure in Algeria, and in particular a seething native population. "The complications of our policy threw them out of their ordinary round, the liberty of our ideas scandalized them, and the spectacle of our civilization provoked in them a kind of *malaise*, and less admiration than defiant stupor."<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, an organized and powerful rising broke out in Algiers and Constantine in 1871, and evoked an instant response in the perennial storm-centre of the Kabylie mountains; and the point was that, unlike previous rebellions, this one was a rising of discontented natives rather than a religious movement.<sup>10</sup> It was a protest against the French Government rather than the unbeliever, and incidentally a dramatic spotlight on France's chief obstacle in Algeria—the presence of two million Arabs and Berbers, fighting fanatics all, who simply awaited favourable opportunities like the defeat of France in 1870 to raise the green banner of the *Jehad*. In addition, in 1870, there was the resentment of the Moslems at the ill-advised enfranchisement of the 47,000 Jews *en masse*,<sup>11</sup> and, at the same time, a removal of the link between Government and natives by the forcing-back of the *Bureaux-Arabs*,—the military intelligence officers who were

<sup>8</sup> A. Béhic, *Rapport de la Commission instituée par décision impériale du 5/5/69*, published separately.

<sup>9</sup> L. Rinn, *Histoire de l'Insurrection de 1871* (1891).

<sup>10</sup> M. Wahl, *L'Algérie* (3rd edition, 1879), p. 287.

<sup>11</sup> Cohen, *Les Israélites de l'Algérie et le décret Crémieux* (1900). For connection with the revolt of 1871, see pamphlet of Forest in that year.



- LANDS COLONISED (APPROX.)
- ▨ LANDS SEQUESTERED AFTER 1871 REVOLT.
- LIMIT OF CONQUEST, 1845. ———, 1870.

# ALGERIA IN 1871.

the pick of France's colonial *personnel* and who at least personified the Government and made it intimate to the natives. Instead of these sympathetic *liaison*-officers, who understood the natives to some degree, Algeria was ruled by a civil Government which wished to reverse previous policy, and which seized the pretext of the rebellion to sequester 400,000 hectares of the best land in Algeria,—practically all the fertile region between Algiers and Constantine. The dispossessed natives (and it must be remembered that, though the rebels numbered only a third of the total population at most, all had to pay the recompense) simply had to go back: *refoulement* was the catchword of the day, and "we shall forget their existence" the policy of the French administrators.<sup>12</sup>

The emphasis was once again entirely upon the European settler. Military rule had given place to civil, in name in 1870 and in reality in 1879: the National Assembly in 1871 had given 100,000 hectares to Alsatians and Lorrainers: and "official colonization" was at its zenith soon after. France was concentrating on the effort of proving that the failure of settlement before 1870 was due to transient conditions and not to the country itself, and that the lugubriousness expressed in the view that "the cemeteries are the only colonies that continually prosper in Algeria" was opposed to the facts of the situation. Indeed, it was manifestly untrue after 1856, in which year the death-rate was for the first time exceeded by the birth-rate; and even in 1860, that is, immediately after the period of suffering, there were 205,000 Europeans in Algeria. By 1880, the number had increased to 376,000, and the agricultural revolution—a change due to the introduction of roads, markets, capital, and settlers—was in full swing. The natives still remained inert and disgruntled (witness the insurrections of 1876 and 1879, and the far more serious rising in Oran from 1881 to 1884); but the country was progressing, and for the first time the French were receiving some reward for their efforts.

Indeed, the year 1879–1880, when civil government really came to the Tell, may be taken as the turning-point in the modern history of Algeria, because then the spirit of optimism appeared, and the future, from most points of view, was no longer crushingly oppressive, despite the accumulated heritage of inapplicable policies which the Government of the *Défense Nationale* had bequeathed to the Republic,—the freeing of the Jews, the policy of assimilation, the *rattachement* idea of rule from Paris, and the native policy based on a refined economic exploitation. Up to this turning-point of 1880, Algerian history had been, so to speak, unilateral and undifferentiated: it was a melancholy record either of

<sup>12</sup> V. Piquet (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 49; L. Vignon, *La France dans l'Afrique du Nord* (2nd edition, 1888), p. 39 and note. See map for actual sequestrations.

complete failure or chequered efforts: but hereafter the consolidation was so obvious and the progress so unmistakable that the history of the land became diversified. There was no longer simply "an Algerian policy," but several policies in various spheres. The protoplasm, which had been quiescent until 1860 and fitfully growing from 1860 to 1880, had commenced a development in all directions,—a development which was far from unhindered or even uniform, but which was at least persistent and vigorous, even in time of failure.

After 1880, that is, the history of Algeria must be considered sectionally, and the lessons of the various sections correlated in a kind of counting-house before the general policy can be determined. The period of genesis,—an unusually protracted and sterile period,—was at an end, and that of realization at hand. Nor could it be said that France lacked negative evidence, the evidence of repeated failure, on which to decide her future policies. Hereafter, she had to gamble on the destiny of Algeria, with a credit balance of 200,000 settlers and a steadily growing trade, but a mortgage of an immutably alienated native stock, and the inapplicable policy of assimilation in every branch. The issue was thus uncertain enough, but wherein it differed from the past was that it at least allowed a permanently favourable outcome to be envisaged.

## II. Administration

For long, the problem that attracted most attention in Algeria was that of administration. Indeed, the prevalent colonial philosophy being as universal as it was, it was the problem that not only concerned the *minutiae* of Algerian government, but decided every other branch of activity, and even the general French policy to be applied to colonies as far apart as the Senegal and the Red River. In a word, the conflict between assimilation and decentralization in Algeria was the touchstone, the determinant, of the entire colonial system of France in the eighties and nineties of last century.

The issue was a simple one at basis. There was no question of self-government at all,—no thought that the French colonies should follow the English in going from oligarchic to representative and then to responsible government. It was simply whether Algeria should be controlled from Paris and on exclusively French models, or by officials in Algiers and on lines suitable to the peculiar local conditions. In other words, it was whether the colonial policy of France (and it must always be remembered that this included economic as well as governmental activities) was to be centripetal or centrifugal. The emergency Government of 1871 had no doubts on the matter. Given the implications of their Republican *coup*, viz., that Parisian democracy represented the

apex of civilization and the triumph of the most orthodox Rousseau philosophy, assimilation was a foregone conclusion. If this system were justified at all, then it was justified everywhere, for exceptions would in reality be attacks upon its basic principles. There could be no just exception to a policy determined by the principles of liberty and equality : to accept the contrary would be to deny the rule of reason and logic. The ideas and the organization of the third French Republic were of universal application,—the situation was so simple as to admit of no cavil.

Hence, until the time of Jules Cambon in 1896, assimilation held undisputed sway in Algeria. In 1870, the idea was popular even in the colony, both because it was associated with the Republican cause and because it marked a reaction against the uncertainty of Napoleon III's time and a newer *rapprochement* between Paris and settlers. Thus, the seventies saw no voices raised against it : indeed, until the appointment of Governor-General Grévy in 1870, interest was centred on the struggle between civil and military, the issue being for long in doubt. Decrees of March and August, 1881, however, postulated a new situation, for they introduced the idea of *rattachements*.<sup>13</sup> This simply meant a dyarchy, with the mass of the departments directly attached to Paris *bureaux* and in no sense responsible to the Governor-General of Algeria. As a corollary, the Governor-General became largely a powerless nonentity, with control only over the unimportant departments. All essential services—and this in a young colony where prompt and decisive action was needed for any policy to be effective—were managed in Paris, independently of him, and he was simply a residuary Governor, and not a Governor-General at all. Algeria thus came under direct parliamentary control, or rather under the feudalistic bureaucracy of the Paris *bureaux* which stand behind parliament : local conditions were subordinated to the needs of parties in France and to the inflexible rules of a permanent Government department, and there were all the frictions inevitable in a system of divided control, and especially of control from a distance. Algeria thus suffered from her proximity to Paris, and the system of 1881 naturally came to mean slowness, inefficiency, inapplicable measures, irresponsibility, and even a premium on corruption. The Governor-General was a *fainéant*, and control from Paris inadequate in essential matters and over-meticulous and exasperating in impractical minor policies.<sup>14</sup> Under Tirman in particular (1881–1891), government simply retrogressed, because of the impossibility of a concerted move in advance : with an emphasis on disruption, co-operation was out of the question, and,

<sup>13</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 27/8/81, 6/9/81.

<sup>14</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Nov., 1900, p. 358.

with control from Paris, energy on the part of individuals in Algeria meant only to be cashiered. As Wahl, in the standard exposition of Algerian policy, summed the matter up, "this unhappy centralization placed Algerian affairs at the mercy of parliamentary influences, of the incompetence of Paris *bureaux*, and the harassing of rival administrations. Power and responsibility were so scattered as to be nowhere."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, responsibility could not be sheeted home under such a disjointed policy, and Algeria drifted in an administrative paralysis, the disease in one part of the body inevitably influencing the rest.

But, as the whole colonial system was deemed to be at stake, reform was very difficult. In separate commissions of inquiry, the parliamentary reformers, Ferry and Burdeau and Jonnart, rivals as they were in most matters, showed the dangers of assimilation and excessive centralization: and so obvious had the failure been in political and native and economic organization that the general principle of *rattachements* was reversed in a decree of December, 1896.<sup>16</sup>

This decision, hardly contested as it was, marked the definite sanctioning of the principle that each colony was an entity, with local interests of its own, independently of those of France,—a concept hitherto unknown in French colonization. It did not envisage anything in the nature of the English autonomy or self-government: it simply meant the development by French officials as before, but in the new direction of the colony's own interests. It was the recognition, not of self-government, but of decentralization and development along local lines. However, Jules Cambon, whose attacks on *rattachements* after 1891 did much to provoke the final decision, went further, and definitely linked a policy of self-government on to decentralization. He wanted to set up a representative body and give it financial rights, especially the power of voting its own budget. But this was far from being countenanced by the reformers of 1896, who had not even reached the stage of representative government, to say nothing of responsible government, but who nevertheless were building better than they knew in opening the floodgates of reform. That is why the financial reforms of 1900 followed so precipitately on the political changes of 1896, despite the ban on future innovations in that year.

The political advance achieved, the struggle was transferred to the economic sphere, for the Algerian settlers, numbering 200,000 by 1899, were demanding not so much political rights, as some power of financial

<sup>15</sup> Wahl (1897), *op. cit.*, p. 256, and especially Jules Cambon, *Le Gouvernement-Général de l'Algérie* (1918), p. 13 *et seq.*

<sup>16</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Senate, 31/5/93; Deps., 11/11/96. Cp. article in *L'Afrique Française*, Nov., 1900, p. 357.

control. Until 1900, every detail of the Algerian financial system was decided in Paris, and there was no method by which the colonists could even express their views. Naturally, to modify any fiscal arrangement ordained by Paris was beyond the scope of imagination. The centralizing tendency was dying hard, and seemed especially virile so far as money matters were concerned. Apart from their three senators and six deputies in the French Parliament, the Algerian settlers were really governed by a bureaucracy and had no rights. In August, 1898, however, largely as a result of the change two years previously (but in no wise contemplated at the time), a means of consultation was provided by the institution of the Financial Delegations (*Délégations Financières*), a kind of embryonic legislative body, nominated in panels or distinct sections so as to represent interests and not individuals. There were sections for the Government, for the European settlers, and for the natives; and the joint body, which was quite powerless beyond expression of opinion, was supposed to be a barometer, so to speak, to gauge the repercussion of financial policies on the various sections affected. It was a sop to popular agitation and, at the same time, a useful and ingenious method of estimating public opinion, while ostensibly a concession of liberalism.<sup>17</sup>

But the centralizing instinct was still strong and would almost certainly have triumphed, had not further reforms been practically wrested from an unwilling giver by a fortuitous combination of circumstances. In the first place, the bitterness of the anti-Semite crisis in Algeria in the late nineties, a bitterness which found expression in riots on so extensive a scale as to be almost incipient civil war, showed the need, or the absolute necessity, of giving the colonists other interests and other means of expression than racial antipathies. Some concession was inevitable, if civil order was to be maintained in the land. The country was seething with discontent and with a vague sense of repressed and thwarted desires: adolescent, the community was restricted to the privileges of infancy, and its vigour was finding expression in unhealthy perversions. To this obvious need of some concessions was added the influence of Waldeck-Rousseau, the Premier of France from 1899 to 1902, and always an adherent of collaboration, alike in general and native and economic policy: and he was aided by the firmness of Governor-General Jonnart and of Berthelot, the budget-reporter. The result was the wresting from Parliament of the epoch-marking law of December 19,

<sup>17</sup> This ground is covered in Mallarmé, *L'Organisation Gouvernementale de l'Algérie* (1901). Good articles are in *Revue du Droit Public*, 1899, 2nd half, p. 52. It also set up a *Conseil Supérieur de Gouvernement*,—a mixed Council, with various representatives on an official basis. It is a kind of Algerian Upper Chamber, and since 1900, has had limited budgetary rights.

1900,<sup>18</sup> giving Algeria (and thus inferentially the other colonies, when they became worthy of it) a complete financial autonomy,—a budget of her own and practically a complete control over the so-called “ optional ” sections.<sup>19</sup>

The principle was keenly, almost bitterly, contested. It had long been a goal of reformers,—of Marshal Randon in 1854, of Governor-General Pélissier in 1861, and of Béhic’s famous report of 1869, but, despite the support of Governors-General Tirman and Cambon after 1881, the idea was rejected as long as Burdeau, a determined opponent who threw his burly form directly athwart the reform movement, remained the arbiter of French finances. The Brisson Cabinet proposed a special budget in 1894, but fell, although, from this time onwards, the proposal came to be supported by a strong section who, knowing little and caring less about Algeria, wanted to lessen France’s financial responsibilities there. By a paradox not unusual in France, a measure to develop the colonies was aided by sections which were anti-colonial, but which deemed the reforms advantageous from the point of view of metropolitan finance. Viviani, for instance, declared in 1899 that Algeria should borrow her own money and pay for her own development, and therefore had to have a separate budget and civil personality. The country was definitely opposed to increasing its payments for Algeria, because it was doubtful of the results achieved for the 1,902 million francs spent to December, 1890.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, as the annual expenses, even in 1900, were more than the receipts, France, it was argued, could not lose by transferring the responsibility to the colony. It was this thought that decided the favourable vote of 1900, so that the concession of financial autonomy to Algeria, landmark in colonial history though it was, must be attributed hardly at all to a more enlightened spirit of colonial policy, and almost entirely to a desire to evade further, and even existing, colonial responsibilities. France was simply making the best of a bad job, and trusting, though to judge from the debates of 1899–1900 not too confidently, that the colony would be able to straighten out its unfavourable financial position. But of liberalism, and a progressive spirit, and a belief in decentralization and even fair play, there was little or none. The reform was a concession to circumstances and

<sup>18</sup> For passage of this law, see *Journal Officiel*, Deps., sess. ord., 17/5/99, 15/12/99, 23/5/00, 20/12/00. For the general position, see the Clamageran Report (Senatorial Commission of 1892) in *Journal Officiel*, Senate, sess. ext., 1892, docts. parl., p. 518. The report on the actual *projet de loi* is in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., sess. ord., 1900, docts. parl., p. 1708.

<sup>19</sup> Against these, and completely under the executive control, were the “ obligatory ” sections,—those necessary to ensure the continuity of administration.

<sup>20</sup> Burdeau Report (*L’Algérie en 1891*), p. 3. To end of 1890.

practically an evasion of duty. Perhaps the best commentary on French colonial morality was that this point of view was openly expressed and that the anti-colonials largely favoured the measure!

The new arrangement was that France was to continue paying the military expenses and to guarantee the payment of interest for the railway loans, but there her responsibility for Algeria's finance stopped. The colony had to pay all the expenses of civil administration, but in return received the proceeds of all taxes. In the case of deficits, it could borrow, as the law of 1900 gave it a civil personality and thus the power of contracting loans. France had largely withdrawn from the financial world of Algeria, and it was a genuine financial autonomy that had been conceded. Even the right of veto was limited in practice, for the Governor-General and the Government prepared the local budget and the local assemblies voted on the whole and controlled part, the only customary intervention of the French Council of State and Parliament being to pass the optional part as a whole.<sup>21</sup> The Chambers usually confine their attention to the obligatory sections, thus adhering to the original idea that the Budget was to be a piece-work affair, each body having its own share, with a minimum of conflict.

When it is remembered that political representation was practically unknown in Algeria at this time, the significance of these financial reforms will readily be grasped. Indeed, this brings us at once to one of the fundamental differences between English and French procedure. In the English colonies, political reforms invariably preceded economic, and the ordinary development was from government by officials and control from England, to representative, and gradually to responsible government,—that is to that stage in which the colony had control over its own finances. But France knew nothing of this gradual development, and, with her everywhere, the demand for reform meant economic privileges. The pressure of an overwhelming native or foreign majority in every colony reversed the ordinary procedure, and so to-day we find in the French colonies an effective economic self-government with practically no political self-administration. Instead of political bodies or miniature Parliaments evolving in the colonies, there arose bodies like the *Délégations Financières* of Algeria,—financial advisers representing the various *blocs* of interests, and not concerned with purely political matters. Even the Tunisian council-scheme of 1922 is on this analogy.

Nor can one argue from the British analogy in connection with the actual text of the reforms of 1900, for, taking into account the predominance of officials appointed from Paris and the need for an affirmation of each project by the Paris Ministry, it could be argued that this simply

<sup>21</sup> Peringuey, *L'Autonomie Financière de l'Algérie* (1904), for details.

represented the state, say, of Australia under the early naval governors, before even the legislative council of 1823 was arranged for. But this is not so, both because the letter of the arrangement allowed a real autonomy impossible in the Australian case, and because this tendency was further accentuated in practice. The officials in Algeria, especially from Tirman's time, were curiously associated with the colony and, largely because of their objection to the idea of *rattachement*, were its spokesmen as against Paris, and not merely *liaison*-officers or mouth-pieces to disseminate official views. Then, too, the right of veto was practically a form and stillborn. In practice, Algeria came to have a true autonomy over four-fifths of the budget; and it was the demographical position of the country and the traditions of French colonial policy that allowed this to exist without a corresponding degree of political enfranchisement, and seemed to limit it in point of law. The self-control was practically unquestioned, and Algeria, so far as finance went, was in the position of Australia in 1843 rather than Australia in 1815, but without any corresponding development of political self-government. Nothing could better demonstrate the curiosities of French organization than that the one could exist apart from the other.<sup>22</sup>

It is difficult to analyse the results of autonomy on Algerian finance, as the position was so involved both before and after the granting of the privilege. Before 1900, the one obvious fact was the permanent deficit,—that for 1900 alone being over 86 million francs, and the accumulated total since 1830 close on five milliards! Every year France had to give a credit to Algeria even to balance the civil budget, and it was clear that either the productiveness of the country or the method of taxation was inadequate.<sup>23</sup> To confuse the situation still further, the official publications of Algeria purported to make out a profit each year, even in the nineties, whereas those published in Paris revealed a marked and permanent deficit! Even Leroy-Beaulieu, a moderate, referred to Algeria's finances as "a mystery pure and simple," and nobody could unravel the crossed threads.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, it was clear that the country's finances were not in a sound state.

This analysis applies equally to the situation after 1900 as to that before it. Officially, the budget-reports showed an instant and increasing surplus, but the very suddenness of this economic transformation was sufficient to arouse scepticism. The first special budget of 1901 showed a credit of one million francs, the second two million, and so on, until the

<sup>22</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, July, 1901, p. 227, for usurpation of functions even in the first local budget.

<sup>23</sup> Burdeau Report (1892), p. 2; Ferry Report (1890), p. 397.

<sup>24</sup> P. Leroy-Beaulieu, *L'Algérie et la Tunisie* (1887), pp. 192-195. He referred specifically to "pretended surpluses."

accumulated profits reached 52 million francs by 1907,—wonderful results for a period of beginnings and bad years and partial failures. But a closer analysis shows that this result was reached only by transferring certain “extraordinary expenses” to the metropolis and by counting loans as receipts! The position was favourable only because the unprofitable expenses were charged to France, and because the colony, after narrowly limiting the scope of civil government, was allowed to keep the profits in those spheres.

Algeria was really not shouldering her own responsibilities, and taxation was inadequate. In 1910, for instance, the resident of France paid two-thirds as many taxes again as the French resident of Algeria; and such taxes as there were were unevenly distributed, for there were no direct taxes save on property and business, and rich colonists paid scarcely anything.<sup>25</sup> So that, given the economic progress of the intervening decade, it is dubious if the cession of financial autonomy to Algeria was beneficial to France: on the other hand, it certainly helped the colonist, but at the expense of the metropolitan taxpayer and the later generations of Algerian settlers. The whole position, in fact, had something anomalous about it,—that France, notoriously stringent in her colonial *régime*, should allow the privilege of 1900 so to develop as to spell immunity for the settler from his just burdens, and an increasing financial load being thrown on France, without any recompense. The Algerian development was unhealthy for all concerned, and, taking all factors into account, the expenses of Algeria in 1910 were at least double the receipts, artificial budget-balances notwithstanding. On the other hand, the apparent financial prosperity provided a general optimistic background for administration and development in other directions, especially in facilitating State loans; and this largely accounts for the ebullience in Algerian affairs after 1900. Algeria, having achieved, and from her own lights having justified, financial autonomy, felt free to develop in other directions, and even to turn to the *bête noire* of Algerian affairs,—native policy.

### III. Native Policy

Here we come to the most troublesome, and certainly the least successful, phase of Algerian history. The history of the colony has always been dominated by the presence of two million virile and passively hostile natives, embittered by the mistaken policies of the past, and hating France with the accumulated hatred of four generations, stiffened by religious fanaticism. France makes no secret of the breakdown of her

<sup>25</sup> R. Aynard, *L'Œuvre française en Algérie* (1912), pp. 107–108. For position see Cochery's budget-speech in *Journal Officiel*, docts. parl., 1909, Vol. I, p. 114.

native policy in Algeria and admits that it was her fundamental error. Algeria has always been the testing-ground for the idiosyncrasies of French theorists in this matter, and, for long, the policy was determined by anything except the facts of the situation.

To start with, the native problem in Algeria was singularly complex, even granting the knowledge we have to-day. But with practical knowledge limited, and with a policy shaped for that non-existent person, "the Algerian native," confusion and failure were inevitable: and the policy of "blundering through" in the case of a sensitive native population means failure. France postulated a uniform "native" in Algeria, an "Arab," sometimes viewed as Saint-Pierre's *Virginie*, but more often as a kind of land prototype of the Moorish pirates of the Dey's time, and as a person to be ruthlessly driven back. As Vignon wrote in 1888, the natives were "the original vice" of Algeria; and the average administrator, both before and after that date, gave this an individual as well as a general interpretation. The French view-point was negative and antagonistic from the outset: hence the neglect of actual conditions, and the policies of *refoulement*.<sup>26</sup>

It was a long time before there was anything like an ethnological survey of the situation in Algeria, and certainly, till the close of the nineteenth century, France suffered because of this lack. It was dimly realized by 1870 that there was a distinct cleavage between Arabs and Berbers, but this was not held to be sufficient to cause different policies for the two sections. By 1900, however, it was clear that the fundamental feature in the native problem, or rather the native problems, of Algeria was the distinction between the two races, which were opposite in almost every respect, and each of which hated and despised the other.

The Berbers are the mountaineers, the descendants of the pre-Mohammedan populations and the real autochthones of the country. They are essentially mountain-dwellers, and as such are strongest in Kabylie, the Aurès, and Mزاب. They are a mixed race, like the South Europeans in physique: indeed, thousands of them are scarcely distinguishable from Auvergnats or Limousins, and, in temperament as well as bodily, they are the Corsicans of North Africa. Their organization is individualistic and largely democratic: prior to 1871 everything was decided in the *Djemaa* or communal assembly; and Kabylie organization was in reality based on a *régime* of patriarchal landowners.<sup>27</sup> The Kabyles, being agriculturists, were keen individualists, and always had an eye on material progress; that is why, at certain seasons, they provide the peripatetic labour-supply of Algeria, as many as twenty thousand of

<sup>26</sup> A good account is in Vignon (1888), *op. cit.*, p. 236 on.

<sup>27</sup> Hanoteaux et Letourneux, *La Kabylie et les Coutumes Kabyles* (1893), Vol. I.

them temporarily migrating from some communes. For the rest, they resist the foreign penetration of their mountains, and are distinctly localists. "They are not a people," it has been said, "but a mosaic of small democratic groups, of very diverse origins, and often divided by ferocious hatreds."<sup>28</sup> All in all, although their supposed primitive virtues and the extent of their democracy have probably been exaggerated, they were fighting freemen of the hills, organized in small communities of individualists, and with no omnipotent central organizations. Finally, they have, in their aversion to everything foreign, reserved a special hatred and contempt for the Arabs who usurped their land in the ninth century and enforced the word of the Prophet—and thus they remained a dissident *bloc* when France tried to organize all of Algeria on an Islamic basis.

The so-called Arabs in Algeria are not really Arabs at all: their only unifying features are the Mohammedan religion and the fact they are all non-Berbers. In all of North Africa, the word "Arab" refers more to culture than to blood, for Arab blood is very limited: Arabs and Turks and Moors and negroes have all mixed, the result being the "Algerian Arab" of to-day—a nondescript ethnic type. That is what is meant when it is said that the Arab is "a social type rather than an ethnic element"<sup>29</sup>: the only real significance of the word is in implying a social and political system based on the Islamic religion. Numerically only about a fourth of the population, the mixed Arabs predominate in so far as culture and organization are concerned, because, since the eighth century, they have forced their ideas on the other ethnic elements.

They are nomad pastoralists, with a social polity based on the family or tribe. Organization is frankly feudal, the emphasis being on the ruler, and not, as with the Berber, on the individuals. All control is centralized in the group-heads: the *Sheikh* administers the *douars* or tent-circles, the *Caid* the tribe, and the *Agha* the group of tribes, and they are practically absolute potentates. Arab organization rests on centralization and authority, and, just as the father is supreme in the family, so the group-leader is supreme in the group. The Arab thus has less independence and individuality than the Berber: Arab men are less energetic and progressive, Arab women less free.

But it is Mohammedanism, at once a system of law and government as well as a religion, that is at the basis of Arab affairs. This fighting religion binds the Touareg of the desert and the Atlas troglodytes and

<sup>28</sup> H. Lorin, *L'Afrique du Nord* (1908), p. 129.

<sup>29</sup> E. Doutté, *L'Islam algérien en 1900*. Doutté revealed Moslem organization to France the most clearly. A good short account is in Aynard (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 41 *et seq.*

the Europeanized Arab traders of the towns : and, because it correlates political and economic matters with religious sources, imposes an almost impassable barrier in the way of reform. To attack Arab economic organization means attacking some obscurely connected phase of Islam, and to stir up this means the Holy War, for the Mohammedan exists only to fight for his religion. El Bokhari's cry of so many centuries ago has lost none of its appeal through the ages : " I would wish to be killed in the Holy War, then to be recalled to life and killed again, then again recalled to life and again killed ! " <sup>30</sup> What could a foreign Unbeliever do in the way of reform under such conditions, when the natives were simply seeking for pretexts to raise the banner of militant Islam ? Mohammedanism literally surrounds the whole of Arab organization, in every sphere, with a wall-fence, to cross which means a constant danger, a certainty almost, of a fanatical explosion. In addition, to keep the emotional *furor* always simmering, there are the wandering *marabouts* or agents of the thirty religious fraternities in Algeria, who have been largely responsible for each of the risings in the land, especially for the South Oran outbreak of 1881. <sup>31</sup> Certainly, the influence of localism counteracts this to some degree, but, even discounting this, the religious nature of Arab society in Algeria presents the most complicated problem in the land, and, by its nature, is insoluble, save in the direction of absolute abstention, a position impossible if the land is to progress. It is because the roots of Islam go so far and twine round every part of the Algerian tree, like the sycophant sarsaparilla round a gum-trunk, that the problem becomes insoluble, and a matter insignificant in itself is transformed into a moral issue sufficient to stir up a *Jihad*.

In the desert, that is, beyond Biskra and the Atlas, the native problem assumes a still different form, because of the difficulty of effective supervision in this land of enormous spaces. There are 60,000 Arabs round the northern oases, but (and these latter afford the problem) an indefinite number of nomad Touareg roaming round the desert and living primarily for pillage. The oases-dwellers are to some extent democratic in their organization, like the Berbers, but grafted on to this idea is a use of slave and serf classes, domestic slaves being easily obtainable from the great caravan-routes leading into the interior : on the other hand, the camel-raiders, the nomads proper, are aristocratic in their organization, and having nothing in common with their more prosaic semi-sedentary fellows. Both, however, unite in affording a difficult problem to the

<sup>30</sup> El Bokhari (French edition), Vol. II, p. 284. His *Cahih* gives an excellent account of the fighting spirit of Islam. Cp. Koran, *suras* 8, 47, 66.

<sup>31</sup> For these, see L. Rinn, *Marabouts et Khouan* (1884), or Vignon (1888), *op. cit.*, p. 210.

administrator, although to some extent the issue is simplified because there is practically no contact with Europeans, as there is with the Arabs and Berbers in the zone from the Atlas north.<sup>32</sup>

It is readily evident, therefore, that, even given a perfect knowledge and understanding of the situation (factors which were lacking), the various native problems of Algeria well nigh defy solution, and certainly appear insoluble in those regions where a *laissez-faire* policy is out of the question, and where native organization has to be modified to meet the demands of European penetration. In Algeria, such penetration naturally and inevitably meant disintegration and suffering and struggle: disguise the matter how one may, this is always the fundamental fact to which one comes back, and which shows how inevitably the record of early policy had to be largely one of failure. A compromise was out of the question: one side had to give way: and, however hardly they resisted, this had to be the natives. Consequently, North Africa was for some time a charnel-house of massacred natives, and then a region where the natives, either by force or a policy of attrition, were forced back, and ever back,—away from the Tell to the mountains, and still back towards the desert.

The first French policy was thus quite clear,—that of *refoulement*, the driving-back referred to above. The Europeans had to fight till Abd-el-Kader's fall in 1847, even for a footing. Even then, fighting had to continue, because the mountains were as yet untouched, and because the settlers were convinced that their safety depended on a constant display of force. With an army of 50,000 to protect a European population of 425,000 (1850) set down in the midst of over two million sullen or openly disaffected natives, the mathematics of the situation seemed clear: and even Louis Vignon, a moderate reformer and one of the French colonial experts, held in 1888 that "moral conquest" and "penetration" were entirely out of the question, and that the *douars* of the Arabs had to withdraw to the desert as the villages of the colonists advanced. Go back or be forced back, was the policy; and it was not an exaggeration to say that stern measures were rather desired by the European, to point the moral of the logic. As a Commission of Inquiry reported in 1898 the issue was clear. "There is no longer any place in the Tell for anyone but the European or native peasant who tills the ground. If the Arab does not wish to become this peasant, then he is condemned to perish, he is committing suicide."<sup>33</sup> And every observer knew that the

<sup>32</sup> E. F. Gautier, *La Conquête du Sahara* (3rd edition, 1922), pp. 164–167.

<sup>33</sup> J. van Vollenhoven, *Essai sur le Fellah algérien* (1903), pp. 220–221. Full details of the position are in *Documents de l'Enquête de la Commission de Protection du Propriété indigène en Algérie*, 1898. For the general attitude, see L. Vignon, *Un Programme de Politique Coloniale* (1919), p. 189 *et seq.*

Arab would not, and, his notion of society and religion being what it was, could not, become a mere beast of burden for the settlers.

Therefore, they lost first their colonization land in the Tell, and then their forests or grazing lands, and came to drift in a helpless lethargy of pessimism, with their past uprooted, their present miserable, and their future bleak. The new method of agricultural production, the veritable agricultural revolution that was changing the face of the land, passed over them: and the changing facts combined with their psychology to produce an inertia of despair, fading off naturally into disaffection. Nor was the fault entirely that of the new-coming Europeans, because the Algerian Arab, idle by habit and instinct, and with a limited intelligence and a complete apathy, was content to indulge in a contemplative resignation, and would not adopt the new methods. They made little attempt at adaptation, or to grapple with the changing circumstances, but simply gave way; and, with the fatalism of their race, neglected to grasp by the forelock even that limited opportunity offered to them. Seeing no progress and convinced of the futility of efforts to improve their lot, they just withdrew, and, by the complaisance, deteriorated the very fibre of their being. So it comes about that the Director of the Algerian Bank can say, "they have nothing to present for credit, not even honesty." Fanaticism commenced, and a careless insouciance completed, the racial decline; and it was this nerveless creature who had taken the place of his fighting forbears in the regions of settlement, and it is this side of the picture which must be considered in estimating the balance sheet of French policy in Algeria. The Arab was by no means a despairing manly figure, overcome by brute force. On the other hand, this was no adequate explanation, and still less an excuse, for the French policy of *refoulement*, which was simply a harsh economic necessity, pursued regardless of the human suffering entailed.<sup>34</sup>

Whatever the cause or justification, the fact of suffering could not be denied. "Confiscation," "*cantonnement*," "*refoulement*,"—these were the terms used in the period before 1890, and naturally bred in the native mind a corresponding degree of disaffection. The repression of the revolts of 1871 and 1881–1884 were more stringent than the situations warranted, and the unduly large expropriations which followed merely confirmed the native impression that their interests did not count in the slightest. Everything combined to bring about this frame of mind,—the diseases and depopulation of the sixties, the revolts of the seventies and eighties, and the continued *refoulement* and confiscations; and, by the nineties, the tribes were undeniably disaffected in general.<sup>35</sup> Personal

<sup>34</sup> Van Vollenhoven, *op. cit.*, pp. 166, 182.

<sup>35</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Nov. 1891, pp. 5–6.

interest explained the attachment of those in the coastal zone, but, as practically every observer of the situation (Burdeau and Ferry and Cambron and Wahl and Vignon) agreed, their reasoned conviction was one of ingrained and ineradicable hostility to the French. The French had reduced them to "a mere dust of men," said Ferry; and another authority summed the matter up by saying, "we have broken the foundations of native society without giving them a place in our own."<sup>38</sup> They rested, resentful and despairing, facing the onrushing French from the desert fringe, and speaking of '64 and '67 and '71 and '82, yet without the initiative or power of duplicating those rebellions. They were rebels still, but conditions restricted them to passive instead of actual insurrection.

France had thus alienated the Arabs, the one bright spot being Bugeaud's native system which, set up in 1844, lasted till 1870 over the whole land, and even after that in South Algeria and elsewhere. This was the famous system of the *Bureaux Arabes*, by which each administrative *cercle* had a staff of trained intelligence-officers, whose work it was to secure a *rapprochement* with their native charges, and who, despite the policies of Paris and Algiers, succeeded in really coming into contact with native essentials and to some extent counteracting the inapplicable or spoliatory policies enforced by the general government. But, on the whole, their efforts were lessened by the wider policies, and, after 1870, they were confined to the southern desert. In this field, as elsewhere, Bugeaud's constructive work somehow failed to survive the forces of opposition, although there is no doubt that his system was as applicable as it was desirable, under the given circumstances.

#### LAND

The prevailing conflict between French and natives found its keenest expression in the land-question, as was inevitable in an entirely agricultural country. The two sets of interest were clearly opposed: the settlers wanted land, and saw only unprogressive natives in the way: opposite them were the Arabs and the Berbers, living for landowning, resolved to resist spoliation to the last, and (with the Arabs at least) having land communally held and linked with religion in their general scheme of things. At first, the French met the difficulty by dispersing the former State-lands (*Beyliks*) or the *habous*, religious lands which, regardless of the smouldering opposition of the Moslems, they had expropriated. Then there were the fruits of revolt, and it became practically a truism that a rising, once repressed, was a direct aid to the

<sup>38</sup> A. Bernard, in *L'Année Coloniale*, 1900, p. 13. Compare Wahl (1888), *op. cit.*, p. 32.

State. As Vignon naively summed up the matter: "Each revolt, in effect,—and they were numerous, as the repression of one was often the germ of another—served as a pretext for the confiscation of part or even all of the tribal lands. It was thus that the natives were driven back (*on refoula les indigènes*) in the three provinces, all of their best lands being taken for distribution among the colonists."<sup>37</sup> The French administrators had no hesitation in applauding such a line of conduct, for the exploitation of the natives was the theory in the ascendant. Rather inappropriately, a Commission for the Protection of Native Property reported in 1898 that "it is necessary above all to concentrate on the development of colonization and give to those Frenchmen who wish to colonize the means of buying land easily: the question of native property thus finds itself, if not scattered, at least relegated to second place." The Commission thus disposed of their difficulty by denying its existence: and this attitude was the fundamental assumption in dealing with the question of native lands. The relative emphasis on matters native and European could not be more succinctly or accurately expressed.

The root of the land-difficulty in Algeria was that property was largely communally held and indivisible, all matters relating to it being regulated by the religious law of the Koran. The natives therefore opposed any intervention by an outside secular Power, and, to complicate the matter, found it difficult to understand the idea of alienation in fee-simple.<sup>38</sup>

Facing this situation, France had either to stand aside, or adopt the long and difficult process of first defining, and then individualizing, and then alienating native lands,—a tedious and dangerous process, but one inevitable where hundreds of thousands of European settlers were concerned. The settlers who were dicing with destiny for success in a strange country demanded land in no uncertain terms, and could see (and they were perfectly logical in so far as they went) a good deal of unoccupied and unused land, held by lazy native owners who would neither improve it nor let others have its use. It was an age-old conflict of general principles, the tragedy being that both sides had perfectly logical arguments. Tradition and religion were arrayed against the imperious forces of economic necessity: land to the settler meant life, to the native the continuity of his tribe, and, what was even more important, earning the after-death reward of having done his duty. It was the entry of such intangible moral and religious issues that so complicated the problem: the overweening importance of land in every primitive community was here increased by the sacrosanct dictates of religion.

<sup>37</sup> Vignon (1888), *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>38</sup> Pouyanne, *La Propriété Foncière en Algérie* (1900), p. 250 *et seq.*, for an analysis of this.

The diffusion of religion over the fields of civil life, here as elsewhere, produced numberless complications.

France's first policy, while somewhat harsh, was at least logical, and, to some degree, founded on a consideration of the various conflicting interests involved. Capitalists were prevented from fishing in the troubled waters of native land-titles by first being limited to transactions in the region open for colonization (1844), and then by being excluded from tribal lands everywhere (1851). The Government's warning was clear: in this difficult matter, the issues were not to be needlessly complicated by the intervention of private enterprise. Such policies as were determined upon were to have a fair chance of surviving on their own merits, and were not to be deleteriously affected by the actions of irresponsible individuals.

So far so good: the issue had been made a community one. But, if these "warning off" edicts prevented spoliation, they did not make for advance, and, to prevent economic inertia and to provide for the needs of the colonists who were coming to Algeria to make the "New France," the Government introduced the idea of *cantonnement*,—that is, restricting each tribe to the land actually needed for the sustenance of its members, and taking the rest to the State for settlement. Harsh as this may seem, it was yet a regulated compromise, and, while involving expropriation, allowed at least a moderate prosperity for all concerned. The natives were deprived of much of their lands, it is true, but they were allowed to live easily and to have enough of their patrimony safeguarded,—concessions which later policies, even the outwardly more liberal ones, failed to secure. Moreover, this partial expropriation for State purposes was a procedure which was intelligible to the natives, for it conformed to Moslem law. All in all, this policy which, from *a priori* reasoning, would seem to be but State-sanctioned spoliation, was probably the most humane and fair under the circumstances, a striking reminder that it is not abstract logic that determines the success of native policies, so much as the policy's own adaptability to the existing situation.<sup>39</sup>

But the modified segregation implied in the *cantonnement* idea did not receive a fair application in practice, for once more, a practical policy was submerged beneath an overwhelming tide of theory coming out of France,—this time due to the unreasoning liberalism of 1860, when France, intoxicated for the time being by the reforming wine of the free-trade treaties, and the concept of "the noble savage," wanted to vindicate

<sup>39</sup> The *cantonnement* of the thirteen tribes is described in the Franck-Chauveau Report, *Propriété Foncière* (Senatorial Commission, 1892), in *Journal Officiel*, Senate, doc. parl., sess. ord., 1893, p. 262 *et seq.* A special report on the law of 1851 was published by Dareste in 1852.

her reputation for liberalism. A *sénatus-consulte* of April, 1863, therefore reserved the land to the tribes, and altogether presaged an idyllic development, with Arabs and Europeans evolving in harmony towards a kind of lesser millennium. In the important letter prefixing the law, this ideal was summed up, and may be emphasized by way of contrast with the actual results of the change.

"The territories of the tribes once known," it ran, "they can be divided into *douars*, which will later allow the attainment of individual property by the prudent initiative of the administration. The undoubted masters of their soil, the natives can dispose of it at will: and, from the multiplicity of transactions between them and the colonists, will be born daily relations more efficacious than all the coercive measures for bringing them to our civilization. To the natives, the raising of horses and cattle, and natural cultures of the soil: and to European activity and intelligence, the exploitation of forests and mines, water-supply and irrigation, the introduction of perfected cultures, and the importation of those industries which always accompany agricultural progress."<sup>40</sup>

Thus Paris: but, in Algeria, drought and cholera and revolt reigned in these years, and, instead of the sylvan co-operation thus elaborated, there were two enemies,—the advancing settlers disgruntled by the sufferings of the past, and so more determined to fight for the future, and the retreating Arabs, decimated by disease and suffering, and resolved to make a stand against the troopers who were even then penetrating the Kabylie mountains and against the settlers who were already beyond the Mitijda plain.

The reality and the ideal conflicted, and the gap was strengthened rather than bridged when this law of 1863 declared the tribes proprietors of the lands of which they had had "permanent and traditional enjoyment." Such a policy may have been practical in 1830, but in 1863 it was only a tragical joke,—the misplaced sport, as it were, of a cynical Titan of colonization. To guarantee their lands to the Arabs when for thirty years they had been driven back by *refoulement* to the desert-fringe seemed to them to be excoriating an unhealed sore: to hand over lands to the Arabs seemed to the settlers, who had won their precarious post at the cost of 150,000 lives, a betrayal and treason. Thus, a seeming concession roused antagonism on both sides, and, in the six years before the revolt of 1871, Algeria, because of the mockery of facts in this inapplicable policy, was a land arrayed for war. And, in the interim, cholera and drought and still more cholera served as appropriate "extras" for the scene being enacted in the centre of the stage. There was something grimly ironical in the way in which an ultra-liberal policy had thus

<sup>40</sup> This, with the relevant documents, is in full in Estoublon et Lefébure, *Code de l'Algérie annoté* (1896), p. 296 *et seq.*, or Piquet (1912), *op. cit.*, pp. 165-167.

evoked abysmal passions, and had led to far worse results than the most frankly spoliatory policy. Spoliation at least would have won over one side: the policy of 1863 alienated both, the Arabs because of the mockery of the situation and because they interpreted the concessions as a pretext for individualization, and the settlers because their hopes of getting land seemed to be indefinitely postponed.

In practice the law safeguarding tribal lands meant a definition and division of the land between the various tribes, and thus a step in the direction of individualism. It prepared the way for a further change, and made the position clear. Incidentally it demonstrated the correctness of the Arabs' forecast as to what the law would mean. Not only this, it also meant actual spoliation at the moment, because the tribal lands were held to consist only of the land actually used, and not that vaguely occupied. The rest went to the Government, and thus the nominally liberal system meant a continuance of *cantonnement*, but with this significant difference that the psychological atmosphere was gloomier than ever. The 1863 law thus came to be the forerunner of alienation. It defined the raw materials with which the Government had to work, and, by 1870, the administrators had the elements of the problem plainly arrayed in front of them,—376 tribes with nearly seven million hectares of land, divided into 676 *douars* or groups, and each lot accurately delimited.<sup>41</sup> The vagueness of the problem had gone: hereafter, everything was a matter of mathematics.

The stage was all set for the next step, the law of July, 1873, which aimed at changing the group lands, thus accurately defined, into individual lands,—that is, so converting them that they would be easily disposable. The aim was to deprive the Arab of his land in an indirect legal fashion, and so each legislative act proceeded a stage nearer that goal. At this date, the need for speeding-up the process was evident: the lands available for colonization were diminishing: the voluntary individualization expected by the *sénatus-consulte* of 1863 had not eventuated: and the temper of the natives, as demonstrated by the insurrection of 1871, showed that nothing was to be hoped for in this direction, especially with the impression made by the confiscations after the revolt. The new law, therefore, abruptly said that French ideas of land-ownership had to apply to Algeria, and that, as in France, the law of the indivisibility of property could no longer pertain. French laws were to apply, and any tribesman, being a co-proprietor in communally-held land, could apply for his share, and, as a result of the application, the whole of the land involved had to be divided among the individuals to whom it

<sup>41</sup> Burdeau Report, 1892, p. 166. For the adverse side, see Aynard (1912), *op. cit.*, pp. 270-273.

belonged. Communal land-ownership, old principle of Moslem law though it was, was thus attacked root-and-branch: the French, though still couching the law in voluntary terms, had in effect declared for immediate and rapid individualization, and had progressed from the previous stage of defining tribal lands to the new position of definitely attacking group-ownership. Land had to become individual and alienable, a transferable commodity, notwithstanding all the dictates of religion and tradition and social organization.<sup>42</sup>

The results of this application of European concepts to a society organized on a completely different basis were to be expected. It was transferring a principle applicable under one set of conditions to vitally different ones, and naturally the evil and the proposed remedy had little in common. Indeed, so great was the disparity that many of the evils of modern Algeria can be traced to the operation of this law of 1873, which clearly delivered the natives over to economic bondage. The most obvious result was to bring the spirit of speculation into the tribes. Any co-proprietor, however infinitesimal his share or however low his standing, could demand his share; and the whole tribal organization shattered as a result. It was not a difficult matter for Europeans to find Arab "men of straw," and to induce them to demand their legal rights.

Here entered the evil of the situation, for it was found in practice that such a demand as often as not led to the dispossession of the rest of the tribe by what was known as the process of *licitation*. The majority of the Arabs affected could not understand the intricate legal process, nor perceive why they should have to pay large costs when they received no obvious advantages. Negligent of such legal forms, and wading in a mass of technicalities quite above them and quite incompatible with their ideas of land-ownership, they very often lost their lands by default; and, even where they were aware of the significance of what was taking place, could not do anything owing to the high costs. The ordinary Arab was sacrificed at the altar of a strange god, and by a legal ritual which he could not in the least understand.

The report of the Franck-Chauveau Commission of 1893 made this quite clear,<sup>43</sup> and showed how the process of division on the demand of one individual really meant expropriation of all or much of the tribal land. One instance quoted by the report, though on an exaggerated scale, was yet typical of what was in some measure taking place everywhere. A group of 513 natives held 292 hectares of land, and one of them demanded individualization. He sold his rights for 20 francs, and the process of definition, once started, had to go on. In the end, the costs of this

<sup>42</sup> Law is in Estoublon et Lefébure, *op. cit.*, p. 395 *et seq.*

<sup>43</sup> Franck-Chauveau Report, *op. cit.*, p. 262 *et seq.*

minute subdivision were eleven thousand francs, and the entire property, when sold by distress, was bought by a French clerk for 80 francs! All of the natives were deprived of their lands and scattered; and this case was exceptional only because of the minuteness of the areas. French laws and French tribunals meant heavy expenses, and the point was that, willy-nilly, the natives were drawn in despite their will, on the demand frequently of a tribal reprobate, and, once in, they could not withdraw until the process was completed. The law, nominally based on voluntary action, operated as a veritable Juggernaut for the natives who were thrust within its clutches; and the result was that, from 1883 to 1889, the Algerian natives lost 40 per cent. of their lands, largely by forced judicial sales.<sup>44</sup> There was no doubt that the natives suffered cruelly, and without receiving any return, however inadequate.

The next difficulty, apart from the opportunity of abuse offered to individuals and the placing of the whole tribal destinies at the mercies of any one individual, was that the law was inapplicable in principle. It was the application of an ultra-legal European process to a society unsophisticated and uneducated, and, moreover, already amply provided for under their traditional land-tenure. It was like attempting to apply the English law of succession and real-estate to the neolithic society of 10,000 years ago, without any preparation or education: the gap of thousands of years in social organization was ignored. The Arabs had not progressed to that social stage in which individualization was wise, or when individual responsibilities could be exercised in a successful manner. As a Governor-General concluded: "We thought to free property before freeing men. The very idea of property, such as the Roman Law and long centuries of progress have made it with us, was foreign to the Arab spirit, and it is only by degrees that it can be introduced."<sup>45</sup> The confused family idea, under a patriarchal system of polygamy, made such a sudden reform quite impossible: the family itself had to be defined before property could be, otherwise the cart was being put before the horse.

Further, the individual had to be created before he could be given his lands, for, striking as it may seem, the individual as such did not exist in the Algeria of 1873. The natives had no *état civil*, or even patronymic name,—so hundreds of individual titles bore the same name. For a time, the tragical aspects of the situation were merged in the farcical, for the French officials tried to solve the dilemma by themselves picking names for the natives. This was a huge joke so far as the natives were concerned, and the funniest thing of all the funny things that these itinerant Lands Commissioners, who so confused and amused the natives,

<sup>44</sup> Piquet (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>45</sup> Burdeau Report, 1892, p. 175.

did. The major processes were to the natives utterly incomprehensible, but still, it was Kismet, the foreigners said it had to be : but here was a new game they could understand. Everything, therefore, went well under the new plan, until the French began to suspect that it was going too well, and found that the obliging natives readily accepted the names given them,—indeed, accepted various names from various Commissioners! “Some made a collection, carefully kept in the bottom of their *chechia* (hood).”<sup>46</sup> Therefore, in 1883, France had to retrace her steps and pass a law regularizing the *état civil* of the natives,—in a word, creating them as individuals. All the time, while the State was thus achieving nothing, the speculators, spurred on by their success and easily finding willing agents in a crumbling native society, were selling up the land. The natives suffered, the State gained nothing and was indeed losing the seven francs a hectare that individualization usually cost, but the speculators had found a permanent and infallible confidence-game, where the victims either remained unsophisticated or, awakening to the realities of the situation, could do nothing.

The Burdeau Report of 1892 and Franck-Chauveau's investigations in the following year showed the folly of this individualization, and its absolute needlessness when more lands continued to be sold under all the pre-1873 confusion than under the new law. Therefore, the process of a general division on individual demand was stopped. But the clock could not be set back to 1873, nor could the process be abruptly stopped by law. Division had commenced, and had to go on : a ban on all activity was a negative policy and no solution of the problem. Quite apart from the forced rate of evolution attempted by the law of 1873, the old communism was giving way, even amongst the populations of the steppes, as French influence advanced. This was a natural transformation, and the Arab saw that individualization in itself, and as distinct from the harmful methods with which it had been associated in the past, certainly possessed advantages. The rights of free work and personal property were growing, and, by a mutual development, would have affected communal land-ownership. The French, therefore, complicated rather than eased the problem by forbidding all transfer and alienation. This was a reaction to an impracticable extreme, and so, by a law of 1897, a compromise was sought between unduly hastened individualization and unduly retarded reform.<sup>47</sup> The idea was to give any individual his land, without enabling him to upset the whole tribe and without giving him a coercive power over his fellows. In short,

<sup>46</sup> Burdeau Report, 1892, p. 169.

<sup>47</sup> Larcher, *Traité élémentaire de Législation algérienne* (3rd edition, 1911), Vol. III, No. 818.

it wanted the benefits and not the abuses of the position of 1873 and tried to uphold native interests and yet allow foreigners to buy land. The device was by "a partial inquiry" as against "the general inquiry" of the earlier law: any individual on demand could receive, not the division of all the land within his group, but the definition of his own share, leaving the rest untouched. The law of 1873 had forced individualization equally on the majority who did not wish it, and the minority who wished to sell: this new law affected only those who desired the change, and had no coercive effect on those who wished to stand outside its terms. It allowed reform and progress, without upsetting the whole tribal structure and without sacrificing the mass of the natives.

Under the new law, any Arab could apply for the registration of his own share of the communally-owned land. A board of experts considered the claim and took into account equity as well as the letter of the law, thus safeguarding the natives. The title, if registered, then allowed alienation, and so land was made available to settlers, without disturbing those natives who did not share in the transaction.

From the first the results were good. By 1909, 115,000 hectares, and, by the end of 1921, 379,275 hectares were individualized in this manner, especially in Constantine.<sup>48</sup> But the general position admits of certain criticisms. It is claimed that the procedure is too slow and costly, and that, the economic progress of Algeria in the interim being what it has, there should be far more individualization, especially in Constantine and Oran, the two provinces most affected. Authorities argue for the adoption of the Torrens system of registration, which has proven so applicable in Tunisia and West Africa, and, once its simplicity and advantages are made manifest, for compulsory as against voluntary registration.<sup>49</sup>

The Algerian position is clearly a compromise, compounded of reactions against various past errors; and, while it has allowed the alert, land-seeking Kabyles to increase their holdings, has resulted in something like a lethargy for the Arabs. Lands are being kept idle by the Arab resentment of past policies, and the natives, driven back to their second-line defences near the desert, are as opposed as ever to progress or to compromise with the French. The present position arises from past errors and the disillusioned hostility thus engendered in native minds; and is a compromise which has perforce to be tolerated, rather than the best policy which logic or the actual conditions could evolve.

<sup>48</sup> For operation see van Vollenhoven (1903), *op. cit.*, p. 99; *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1922, p. 335. A new law was passed in July, 1926, to remedy certain abuses.

<sup>49</sup> E.g. the Flandin proposal, in *L'Afrique Française*, Dec. 1921, p. 428. Cp. Girault, Vol. III, p. 379 note, for need of change.

The history of land transactions in Algeria has thus not been successful, and, to 1897 at least, could be more positively described as a dismal record of failure: the crop sown by the despoiling acts of last century is now bearing fruit,—an insoluble dilemma in the way of all reform.

#### JUSTICE

The land imbroglio was closely connected with the general problem of justice. In the one field, an abrupt and cataclysmic Europeanization had resulted in a forced reversion to native ideas, and an attitude of waiting for gradual and normal change. So it was with the wider problem of justice.<sup>50</sup> Europeanization *à outrance* was attempted at first, but had to yield to a compromise and to a consideration of native influences.

The first policy was to replace the Mohammedan *cadis* or judges and their tribunals (*mahakmas*) by smashing the whole structure and introducing the ideas of the Code Napoléon, both in the criminal and the civil spheres. Here, as elsewhere, the French were convinced of the unquestionable superiority and the universal applicability of their own institutions. French justice was beyond question and good everywhere; and therefore any pre-existing form was simply an obstacle to be brushed aside in order that the backward natives could the better experience the freedom and equity of the French forms.

Clearly opposed to this was the native view-point. The Koran was their religion and their law: it was fixed and immutable; and any interference of outside civil or criminal law would be an interference with their liberty and their religion, the direct cause, perchance, of a Holy War. They said that the law, being fixed by Mohammed, could not change, and that the French contention that it had to keep pace with changing conditions was heretical as well as foolish. There was all the conflict between the immobile and the evolutionary concepts, with the difference accentuated by religious fanaticism and racial hate.<sup>51</sup>

The French early accepted the principle of French law for all criminal cases (1842), but the trouble was occasioned by the civil law, especially as it affected land matters. Everything in this sphere was confused and vague, and rested on traditional bases and old religious usages that could not be examined in the light of logic and practical utility. The confusion was such as to be anathema to legally precise Frenchmen, as, for instance, with the case of a liquidation going to forty successions, and finished by the division of the land in question with a fraction,

<sup>50</sup> Isaac Report (Senatorial Commission, 1892) in *Journal Officiel*, Senate, doc. parl., sess. ord., 1896, p. 403.

<sup>51</sup> For conflict, see Pouyanne (1900), *op. cit.*, p. 608.

the denominator of which ran to fourteen figures! But this case at least allowed of some decision: most simply rambled on for ever, in a maze of obscure and contradictory interpretations.<sup>52</sup> The Mohammedan civil-law was a happy hunting-ground, especially with people as naturally litigious as the Arabs, and with whom simplifying reforms served only to arouse opposition. The French, therefore, had two problems—to simplify the maze of traditional law so as to know where they stood, and then to reconcile the law as thus defined with the principles of the French Code. But codification of Mohammedan law was not achieved until 1916, by the Code Morand, and, in the intervening ninety years, there had been many reforms founded on a more or less complete ignorance.

The way out had been the shortest one,—by transferring various matters in turn from the Koranic to French law until French law came to be the principle, with Mohammedan the exception and confined to certain specific cases. This was completed in Kabylie, first of all, by 1874, because there the clean sweep of Kabylie institutions after the revolt of 1871 left a *tabula rasa*. Since then, these mountaineers have been entirely under French law, for civil as for criminal matters, but simplified to take account of their traditions. The upshot has been relatively satisfactory, because the Kabyle, always a keen individualist, and by no means as casual or as insouciant as the Arab, can look after his own interests to a degree that the Arab cannot; and, moreover, they had no pre-existing religious code to divert their attention from the French law.

In both of these directions, that is, as regards existing law and individual incompetence, the matter was more difficult with the Arabs. Nevertheless, a decree of September, 1886, with the temerity of misunderstanding, bodily transferred land-matters to the French courts. But, as the matter could not be solved so simply, a supplementary decree of three years later arranged for the adaptation of French laws to native conditions, the various customs and usages of the tribe in question being taken into account: in other words, an element of equity was introduced.<sup>53</sup> Even this proved inadequate: the gulf was there, and could not be bridged as long as the approach was from the French to the native point of view, and not *vice versa*. A medley of Arab customs could not be clad with meaning by the interpretation of a French justice or by the twisting of the nearest possible French law to suit the conditions of the given case. To quote even a single instance of this disparity, French law knows a process called “sale with power of redemption,”

<sup>52</sup> Pouyanne (1900), *op. cit.*, p. 59, or article in *Revue algérienne*, 1917, p. 69.

<sup>53</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 11/9/86, 18/4/89.

but limits the period of redemption to five years, whereas the Koranic law allows it to go on for ever. That means that a native pledging his land to a European and thinking that his option of redemption is a perpetual one, loses his land entirely if he does not repurchase it within five years ; and, landless, he becomes a potential rebel, because, according to his law, he has been openly robbed of his patrimony, and the foreigners' courts have legalized the robbery !

Then, even where there was no basic opposition between French and native law, the slowness of French justice and the stress on form and logic made it inapplicable to the needs of the situation. The appellant in times past had been sacrificed to the arbitrariness of the *cadi* and *beylik*, but a man knowing human nature, or, better still, the remedies for obstinacy, could assert himself against this, whereas with this new grinding machine, impersonal and aloof, he had no redress save a decision given by a logic based on quite different conditions.

The rigid adherence to French legal forms, even absorbing as many native customs as the French basis permitted, did not meet the situation ; and the natives were gradually forced into an opposition *bloc*, their temper being demonstrated in the abortive but significant Margueritte rising of 1901.<sup>54</sup> The avowed cause of this was an indefinable *malaise* or feeling of repression, due to the operation of a code of laws different from that to which they had been accustomed. European justice seemed to be a mysterious and terrible machine ; and so, in 1902, there was a reversion to the " repressive tribunals " or summary jurisdiction, which meant a more efficient and rapid justice, and one, untrammelled by the *minutiae* of the French legal code, more suitable to the conditions.<sup>55</sup> The ignorant casual nature of the Arab could understand this summary procedure, and could appreciate the consideration given to his code and customs, instead of the determination being based on the strange and meaningless law from overseas. The change of 1902, partial and bitterly attacked though it was, was really a return to native principles and native codes, and the jurists notwithstanding, a step towards the more equitable and more economical system which has evolved in other French colonies,—the French law for criminal, and, in main, the native law for civil cases. Algeria, however, carries on the older idea of as much assimilation to the *Code Napoléon* in all its branches as is possible, with the corollary of a destruction of native institutions. Indo-China and West Africa and Tunisia, and, indeed, most of the colonies founded after

<sup>54</sup> *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, 15/6/01, p. 755. *L'Afrique Française*, May, 1901, p. 141, or Drumont interpellation in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 1/6/01.

<sup>55</sup> For this much-discussed issue, see Larcher in *Revue algérienne*, 1902-1903, or Girault, Vol. III, p. 290 *et seq.*

1880, have the newer and more elastic system: Algeria retains the rigidity of the all-French conception, the results being the piling of new fuel on the fire of Mohammedan discontent and a breakdown in practice.<sup>56</sup>

#### POLITICAL

Land and judicial reforms in Algeria had thus either failed or resulted in a limping compromise, with the hostility of the natives unabated. Nor was this impression in any wise allayed by the political measures taken by the French. In the first place, the Algerians were not given the rights of French citizens: the Jews, despised by the Mohammedans, were naturalized *en masse* in 1870, but, up to 1919, a native could only be naturalized by the Imperial decree of 1866, which imposed so many formalities that the natives would not come under it, and which, moreover, involved a renunciation of their *statut personnel*, which to a Mohammedan amounts to apostasy. Accordingly, only 736 natives had accepted naturalization before 1890, and even these appeared blissfully ignorant of the new obligations they had incurred, such, for instance, as increased taxation or limitation of their harems.<sup>57</sup> By 1906 the number had swollen to 1,362, but naturalization was still an exception. The natives stood aloof, refused to intermarry or to become French citizens, and clearly showed that they wished no bridging of the gap between the two races.<sup>58</sup> They protested vigorously against the conscription which was introduced in 1912, and which resulted in a solidifying of Mohammedan opinion and the emergence of a "Young Algerian" party, pledged to the fight for economic and political reforms.<sup>59</sup> They protested that they had responsibilities without corresponding privileges, and that the economic and political worlds were closed to them.

That their plea was in part justified was unquestionable. Despite the various reforms and reorganizations, the Algerians were in practically the same position as they had been when Napoleon III had enflamed their national pride by speaking of an "Arab Kingdom." The French conception was that societal advance was beyond the ken of the natives, and that all they could appreciate was a justly exercised force. Even Jules Ferry had reported in 1892 that "the Moslems have no notion of the political mandate or of limited and contractual authority: they know nothing of a representative *régime* or of the separation of powers, but they have in the highest degree the instinct and need and ideal of strong power and just power. In their eyes France is force, she must

<sup>56</sup> Aynard (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>57</sup> Burdeau Report, 1892, p. 224.

<sup>58</sup> V. Démontès, *Le Peuple Algérien* (1906), p. 214,—363 intermarriages in sixty-three years. Cp. Ibn Habilas, *L'Algérie française vue par un Indigène* (1914), pp. 113-114.

<sup>59</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, 1912, pp. 226, 275, 479.

be justice too.”<sup>60</sup> That was the prevalent conception, even with the reformers: the natives were to be governed from above,—justly, it is true, but still with the strong hand, and they were to take no part in group-life.

All that was done, therefore, was to utilize native functionaries in allowing native life to go on as before, and to make a spectacular gesture by an infinitesimal participation in the outside political world. The *caïd* or native chief was to remain, and the affairs of each tribal section managed by a *djemaa* or council of notables. Where such institutions did not exist, they were simply created by decree. For instance, there was no organization of the tribes as a whole, therefore a decree of 1895 instituted tribal-*djemaas*.<sup>61</sup> But, outside of this, the natives had no part in politics, except a small representation in certain local assemblies and a nominated section in the *Délégations Financières*: they had no representation in the Deputies or Senate, and took no part in sending the general colonial representatives to Parliament. Even their representatives in the municipal councils in certain parts of the country had their powers restricted and, as a whole, the great native body was inarticulate. Native representatives, such as there were, were contemptuously dubbed “*Beni-oui-oui*,” in reference to their lack of independence and servile attitude, for, whether elected or nominated, their diffidence in general amounted almost to self-effacement. The natives were viewed as the evil genius of the land, apart and impenetrable, partly a menace and wholly a nuisance: to speak of co-operation with them was the mark either of an idealist or of one who did not live in Algeria. They just drifted along in stagnation.

So obvious was the failure that a Commission headed by Clemenceau and Leygues in 1915 reported that certain far-reaching reforms were not only desirable, but could with justice and policy be no longer postponed.<sup>62</sup> The “native code,” consisting of laws specially discriminatory for the natives, had to be further reduced on the lines of the law of 1914: the native electoral body had to be extended, and efficient representation accorded in the *Délégations Financières* and the general and municipal councils: a new *régime* of naturalization, which did not necessarily imply a renunciation of the *statut personnel* so sacrosanct to the Moslem,

<sup>60</sup> Ferry Report, 1892, p. 82; compare statement of President of Council of Ministers in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 24/12/98.

<sup>61</sup> V. Piquet, *Les Réformes en Algérie et le Statut des Indigènes* (1919), p. 159 *et seq.*

<sup>62</sup> There had been long debates on this question in 1914. See especially *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 10/2/14. For the Clemenceau-Lyegues Report, see *Contribution à l'étude des réformes concernant la situation économique et politique des indigènes algériens* (1916).

provided : and, above all, new guarantees given for the safeguarding of native property. The whole would lead to, and in turn be developed by, the reform of the natives themselves, for they had demonstrated that a race cannot lose its place and traditions for eighty years and have no adequate return, without a weakening in moral fibre and sinking into a morass of supineness and ineffectiveness. The Arabs were rapidly becoming either soulless serfs or *fellahs*, or impoverished and hopeless desert-dwellers, equally lacking initiative and character. The traditional French policy of "Let us weaken them by dividing them and by sapping their virility" was bearing its fruit, and it became obvious, too obvious in fact, how this policy of attrition, by the very degree of its success, involved a weakened community.

After the strengthened *morale* of the war years, therefore, France sought to retrieve her native policy in Algeria, and, in 1919, passed a decree giving the native a greater degree of representation in local assemblies and a law allowing them, under certain conditions, to become French citizens.<sup>63</sup> These reforms aroused much opposition, and it is difficult to see how they were the most suitable starting-point for the regeneration of the Arab, especially in view of the lack of native eagerness to become naturalized, and the priority they give to their economic grievances. But, since the very fact of their introduction betokened a changing mental outlook on the part of the French, they were significant, although they no longer met the situation. Just as ten years before, the centre of native discontent had gone from land-matters to questions of "general status," so now it had passed to economic grievances,—an alteration of emphasis which is perhaps the most significant commentary on the changing demands of native policy and general evolution in the new Algeria.

### ECONOMICS

Algeria is a country of Stone Age agriculturists and pastoralists, and this is the dominating feature in every question relating to it : it has always been thus, and, if the events of the last century will not justify the statement that it will always be thus, they at least show that for long, there will be little change, as progress and the Arab temperament seem incompatible. The native difficulty was twofold, the first and the most grievous question being that of taxation. The natives had to submit to special taxation without corresponding privileges : the

<sup>63</sup> For this important law, see *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 15/5/18, for original project ; Deps. 8/11/18 and Senate 31/1/19, for passage ; Senate, 4/12/18, annexe, for Steeg's Report ; and 6/2/19 for law in full. For its operation, see *Journal Officiel*, 16/11/19.

Europeans have never had direct taxes save on land and business ; but the natives, in addition to these, were subject to an entire network of taxes called the "Arab imposts." Kabylie had a special *régime*, but elsewhere a land tax was paid, and an additional tax on communally held land, and a tax on stock, and a tax on date-palms, and various *corvées*. In the nineties, the total was twelve francs a year, and the natives paid about half the total taxation raised in the land.<sup>64</sup>

From the French point of view, this was satisfactory, because the colonists were relieved of the necessity of finding half their taxes,—for, since the natives received no proportionate advantages, this is what the situation amounted to. Quite naturally, a special Commission of 1892 reported in favour of maintaining the Arab taxes, although Commissions of 1895–1898 and 1902, approaching the matter from a different angle, stressed the inequitable nature of such burdens.<sup>65</sup> Everything connected with them was unfair from the natives' point of view. For the natives, with their inadequate share of the country's wealth, to pay half the State's expenses was clearly unfair, even if they received advantages in return ; but, where there was neither protection nor facilities to progress, the taxation was virtually spoliation,—a duplication of the process that was going on with regard to their lands. As Jonnart reported in 1893, "the interests of the Arabs who do not vote, but who pay and who support heavy charges, are unfortunately sacrificed to those of some dozens of electors who, if they enjoy the right to vote, enjoy also the privilege of not paying much." Three and a half million natives were taxed by a handful of colonists who knew that every livre won from the natives was one less that they themselves had to pay,—clearly "a denial of justice, a kind of exploitation," as Jonnart said, the more so as "nothing or almost nothing is done for them."<sup>66</sup>

Nor was there even an equality of suffering under the scheme, because the Southerner, much poorer though he was, paid almost twice as much as the settled dweller of the Tell, and Oran a third as much again as the richer Constantine. And it was a curious way of fostering agricultural improvements to tax a plough 49 francs in Oran and 36.75 francs in Constantine, when the administration was endeavouring to replace wooden sticks by ploughs ! In addition, the system diverted the scanty capital of the natives from productive employment. It not only acted

<sup>64</sup> Burdeau Report, 1892, annexe 2, pp. 394–396.

<sup>65</sup> For these varying view-points, see the Clamageran Report (Senatorial Commission, 1892), in *Journal Officiel*, Senate, doc. parl., sess. ext., 1892, p. 518, and the following reports published by the Government-General : *Procès-verbaux des délibérations de la Commission d'études de l'impôt arabe* (1892) ; *Commission d'études des charges fiscales* (1898) ; *Commission pour l'étude des impôts arabes* (1902).

<sup>66</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 7/2/93.

as a deterrent of agricultural advance, not only absorbed money that could have been spent on improvements, but even cut into the capital of the natives as distinct from their annual turnover. This is clearly proved by the fact that, in each quinquennial period after 1883, the yield of each native tax, without exception, was steadily diminishing—a luminous commentary in an agricultural country where the yield of taxation was directly based on the agricultural productivity of the people.<sup>67</sup> If the yield was declining, so too was the agricultural wealth of the Arabs, for the one varied directly with the other. Clearly, the essential vice of the Arab taxes was their very existence, for they were as anti-developmental as unjust, and were not even redeemed by being “socially directed,” that is, so levied as to act as direct inducements to make the natives work or to produce desirable social changes. Finance was the only consideration, and the taxes really became a mortgage on the future development of the country.

This position largely explained the second economic difficulty of the Arabs,—the difficulty of conforming themselves to an economic world which was changing from patriarchal to capitalistic agriculture. There was no doubt at any time in the last fifty years whether the Arab was giving way. He could not stand up to the changed conditions, and could not adapt his methods of life to the new demands ; but this was not all. Such a failure did not only mean that the native was standing still while others round him were forging ahead. It also implied that he had to give way actually as well as relatively. In the economic struggle, the weaker side not only had to accept the terms of the victor, but had also to relinquish its belongings. It was an economic war without Hague conventions. Thus, the natives lost two million hectares of land between 1882 and 1900,—the equivalent of 100 million francs, and much of the remainder was being engulfed in the well of usury. Coincidentally with this, production was falling off, and the position of land-holder and labourer gravitated from bad to worse. Ibn Habilas, the spokesman of his fellows, thus held that there was little appreciable difference between the position of the Algerian *fellah* in 1830 and 1924, and Piquet claimed that “the impoverishment of the native is the gravest danger menacing Algeria.”<sup>68</sup> This had been perceived in the nineties, at least after the vitriolic reports of Jonnart and the soberly moral appeal of Ferry’s Commission and the sturdy denunciation of his fellow-Frenchmen by Burdeau. All of these had pointed to the canker of native decline in Algeria, the result being the appointment of a Commission in 1898

<sup>67</sup> Van Vollenhoven (1903), *op. cit.*, pp. 140–141. The special native taxes were abolished in 1918.

<sup>68</sup> Ibn Habilas (1914), *op. cit.*, pp. 67, 137.

to study the measures needed for the protection of native property. However, as the harvest was of opinions rather than facts, little of a constructive nature emerged from these investigations—save one thing, that usury was the immediate cause of the agricultural decline in Algeria, and, with such a heedless native population, spelt economic serfdom.<sup>69</sup>

Agriculture was becoming increasingly competitive and capitalistic : to keep standing, the native had to change his methods and become efficient. But, given the necessary temperament (and the French rather neglected this at the moment), capital was necessary, and in such a way that it could help native advancement without enslaving them and their descendants to a usurer. A law of 1893 had started by organizing voluntary credit-societies, based on the principle of the co-operation of the farmers in a given district, and imposing the security of the group between the individual farmer and the ruin which threatened him. Within fifteen years, such bodies came to include 620,000 members, largely in the back regions, because it was found that, in the joint native and European municipalities, the natives were so sophisticated by contact with the Europeans that they resorted to trickery and spoilt the spirit of the whole scheme, especially when everything depended on the character of the participants and a mutual trust. A law of 1902 went further and provided for agricultural banks on private initiative, a form of agricultural credit existing in the provinces of France itself. This meant that the farmers of a given region could act as a Bank, and receive joint loans for local dispersal. It was really an extension of the credit-society idea, but was not very successful. By the end of 1916, there were thirty-nine such regional Banks, all but eight including both natives and Europeans, but with only 16,000 adherents in all. Nothing has yet been done for long-term credit for individuals, and the State, until 1926, played no part, either directly or indirectly, in securing an adequate system of rural advances, a lack the more obvious in a country that is not only entirely agricultural but is composed of very poor farmers.<sup>70</sup>

It is true, as has been previously pointed out, that the average native character would not seem to justify any extensive scheme at present, for the natives seem shiftless and untrustworthy to a degree, and more prepared to violate the spirit of credit-associations than to take advantage of their facilities and repay the advances. But, as against this, there is the need of the State doing something to stem the decline, even at a loss, because the *fellah's* position is so precarious. The words that Ferry

<sup>69</sup> Compare Ferry's attack in Senate, in *Journal Officiel*, 7/3/91, or the voluminous *Documents de l'enquête de la Commission de protection de propriété indigène en Algérie* (1898).

<sup>70</sup> Aynard (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 299 ; Girault, Vol. III, p. 420 *et seq.*

wrote in 1892 (and it is sufficient commentary on the thirty years between that they apply with a greater force to-day than they did when written) adequately sum up the situation :—

“ With the years, the memory of the sanguinary wars would disappear : what will perpetuate them are the unjust or badly-conceived economic measures, the rigours of the forest *régime* (affecting native pasture), the expropriation of the soil, sequestrations which are not liquidated, the exploitation of native *douars* by French municipalities, and the continually growing weight and the unfair incidence of the taxes.” <sup>71</sup>

The old hatred is kept alive and deepened by the economic wrongs to which the native has had to submit, and France has realized since 1914 that there can be no permanent progress in a community in which the mass of the people are relegated to a segregated world of suffering and reduced to a growing impotence. The strength of the whole depends on that of the parts, and it is now clear that the solution of the problem by weakening the natives to a position of hopelessness is no solution at all, but a weakening of the entire colony. The demoralization of any section of the people, and especially if this section is numerically predominant, can under no conditions strengthen the community, and France is meeting the retribution of a century of policy based on exploitation. So that, economically, she has to commence by retrieving the effect of the accumulated errors of the past, and finds herself hindered by the barrier of mistrust and racial hate.

The Arabs have lost most of their lands and, on the whole, have not progressed economically ; and therein is the native problem. The Kabyles, on the other hand, because of their acquisitive traits and combatant individualism, doubtless in no small measure due to their mountain environment, have prospered, especially in the direction of amassing land, and show how a native race can emerge, even in the face of European opposition. Their success, however, serves only to deepen the gloom of the Arab dilemma, as demonstrating that, however much the basic fault may be with French policy, much must also be attributed to the feckless and irresponsive nature of the Arabs themselves.

So that the problem again splits, and becomes not only one of reversing previous policies and removing their results, but of removing the deterioration of the Arab character in the last century, and, still more difficult, of moulding even the unspoiled Arabs to progressive view-points. In a word, a character-training is called for, and largely owing to the events of the last century, with very poor material. The Arab as a century of French rule has left him, is not a forceful paladin of the desert but a deplorably inert and apathetic weakling, knowing no advance and

<sup>71</sup> Ferry Report, 1892, p. 82.

cares for none, idly awkward and intellectually powerless,—according to a competent French authority. As raw material for a policy of peasant-proprietorship in a virgin country, he is almost hopeless, and yet a policy of *laissez-faire* is no longer possible. The French tried to exterminate them at first, but (save in the sixties) they increased: they expropriated their lands, they impoverished them, they have forced them back, but they still increase and suffer and weaken the State. And so the problem becomes increasingly important, and the Government does not know where to attack the vicious circle, for, even if it acts decisively, it is brought up against the undependable native temperament. Clearly, naturalization, or embryonic political privileges, or ineffective credit institutions are not adequate remedies: yet there the French rest, and perhaps the native problem in Algeria remains the sorriest piece of work in the whole of the French Empire, surpassing in its ineffectiveness the policy of the towns in India or in New Caledonia or the Senegalese *communes*.

The breakdown is clearly recognized, and to read of Burdeau's aim in 1892, with its idea of a progressive collaboration based on the provision of new economic interests and needs for the natives, is almost farcical. A long debate in the Deputies, for seven sessions of January, 1921,<sup>72</sup> exposed the existing position, thrown into clear relief by the long-continued drought. The Algerian deputy showed the native crisis in its true light as a condemnation of the past and a mortgage on the future, and demanded the obvious reforms like increased representation, better municipal self-government, the development of agricultural education and rural credit, the Torrens Act of land registration, and a clear safeguarding of native property,—the same list of reforms which has been advocated for half a century.<sup>73</sup>

The native race is ethnically impenetrable, that is clear: what is equally clear is that it has to become progressive, otherwise progress for Algeria and security for the Europeans there are out of the question. Thus one gets back to Jonnart's budget-report of 1893: "Security? We will have it when we cease to exploit the native under the pretext of emancipating and assimilating him."<sup>74</sup> But now, the problem is not so much to stop the exploitation as to remedy the state of nerveless atony to which it has reduced the Arabs. The native menace is not now one of *razzias* or revolts, but of a canker in the body social and economic. They are no longer an obstacle to be thrust aside: thrust aside time and

<sup>72</sup> A full account is in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 24-31/1/21,—a most important exposé.

<sup>73</sup> The reforms desired by the moderates are in Ibn Habilas (1914), *op. cit.*, pp. 117-121, 137-138.

<sup>74</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 7/2/93.

again, they have come back as a responsibility and as a weakening element in the community, and with a future which cannot simply be eradicated from the Europeans' point of view. That is the retribution which the Arab of to-day is unknowingly demanding of France for the treatment of his forbears; and France is learning that this form of mortgaging the future is always an uneconomic procedure.

#### IV. Land Settlement

As has been seen, the dominating fact in Algeria's history has been the question of land settlement<sup>75</sup>: this is the *motif* giving consistency to the State's economic and native policies, and runs through activity in every direction. After the disillusion of the first two decades, France was seized with the idea that Algeria was a peasant's paradise, a prolongation of France across the Mediterranean where myriads of French settlers would make the Tell bloom with small farms and cosy villages, as in the western provinces of the homeland. A "New France" was the goal (the slogan coming from Prévost-Paradol's much-discussed book of 1868 bearing that title), and this dream has practically been the *fons et origo* of French policy in Algeria. It has been said that nowhere is a tradition created so quickly as in France, and certainly this phrase of Prévost-Paradol's, dubiously applicable though it was, rapidly became a tradition so far as Algeria was concerned. This was the French aspiration for Algeria, the idea of a France *outrémer*, transmitted through Burdeau and Ferry to Sarraut and the post-war reformers, and cherished the more because, save for a far-away strip in New Caledonia, the coast of Algeria was the only part of the entire Empire that could be so developed. A continuation of France, a southern addition to compensate for the losses of the northern frontier,—it was a pleasant dream that the limit of the French Empire should expand from the "blue line of the Vosges" of Ferry's time to the sepia horizon of the Algerian uplands.

This ideal was fostered by the nature of the country. The climate of Northern Algeria was more like that of parts of France than of tropical Africa, and there is far more difference between Flanders and Provence than there is between Algeria and the Midi. So far as climate went, Northern Algeria was a real *colonie de peuplement*. The Alpine peasant was at home in Kabylie, the vigneron of the Aude on the Mitidja plain, and the labourer of Upper-Languedoc on the Bel-Abbès plateau. Algeria was only 700 kilometres away from Marseilles, the fare was less than a

<sup>75</sup> The basic sources for this topic are in M. de Peyerimhoff's huge survey (the best in the colonial literature of any country), entitled *Enquête sur les résultats de la colonisation officielle de 1871 à 1895* (1906), or Pouyanne (1900), *op. cit.*, pp. 211-299. The Labiche Report is in *Journal Officiel*, doc. parl., sess. ord., 1896, p. 15.

pound; and certainly these facts seemed to support "the prolongation of France" idea. On the other hand, the position was complicated by the vigorous and disaffected native population, who constituted a clear *block* athwart the path of settlement and who were often a menace, always a grave obstacle.

Moreover, there was a shortage of land. Practically all, except the sequestered Beylical lands, was held by the natives themselves, who clung tenaciously to their patrimony and surrounded it with a ring-fence of religious taboos or inhibitions. The only way of making land available for settlement, therefore, was by direct expropriation of some form or other, with the consequent difficulties that such a procedure would involve with the natives. Even so, Algeria was a "patchy" desert country, with never more than 100,000 kilometres cultivable. In a word, though the climate was fair, most of the land was worthless and all of it was locked up in the hands of a recalcitrant native population. The *ensemble* of these factors constituted the problem of Algerian settlement: the two factors, native and land, were for ever coming to the surface, now one, now the other, and, between them, effectively removed Algeria from the class of "settlement colonies" and made it a problem *sui generis*, distinct even from its neighbour Tunisia.<sup>76</sup>

From the beginning the French policy of settlement there was dominated by three conceptions, which, with various gaps, lasted till the end of the century. These were a belief in grants as opposed to sale, official villages as opposed to desultory individual action, and small settlement as against capitalistic effort. All of these came from the desire to democratize Algerian settlement, and all were radically different from the policy pursued elsewhere in North Africa, notably in Tunisia, where settlement was based on the opposite concepts of sale, individual effort, and *grande colonisation* by landed *seigneurs*. But, in Algeria, the idea of peopling the land with a class of small farmers, not much elevated above the grade of peasant proprietors, was almost an obsession with the French, doubtless bred by the ideas of mass-emigration engendered by the revolutions of 1848 and 1870. Algeria was to be a re-creation of France, a sunnier peasant-land, and from this idyllic interpretation flowed French land policy.

As far as regarded actual policy, there were three periods. First, up to 1878, there were various experiments, but more in the way of trial-and-error and in the application of general theories than any consecutive policy: then, from 1878 to 1904, there was a consistent policy, so consistent indeed as to sacrifice obviously discordant facts to the shibboleths of the theory,—the theory that the American homestead

<sup>76</sup> de Peyereimhoff, Vol. I, pp. 8-10.

plan was the ideal method of settlement, and that, if managed in Government hands through the *milieu* of officially controlled villages, it could easily be adapted to Algerian conditions. The third period, by reason of the reaction which had been emerging since 1888, naturally took the form of a swingback of policy towards an older line, and the idea of free grants was replaced by that of sale as the basis of land policy. But the connecting-link running through the whole three stages was the notion of official colonization,—that is, settlement in groups at places already chosen and prepared by the administration. The French pinned their faith to this policy, and the various devices of sale or grant or temporary alienation were viewed only as optional methods of securing the common end. It has been the emphasis on the official nature of colonization, and the implied ban on uncontrolled individualistic effort, that has differentiated Algeria for almost a century in this matter of land-settlement, and that has made the experiment doubly interesting from a comparative point of view.

The first period, somewhat naturally, in view of the lack of previous experience in colonization, and because of the determination of policy by an *a priori* theory, was one of painful adjustments to reality. The land and the people seemed to have combined against the first settlers, although probably their greatest foe was the administration that settled them under such conditions. The first Mitidja settlers worked feet in a marsh and harassed by enemy sniping, so that those who escaped the latter succumbed to the disease engendered by the former. In one village, between 1835 and 1841, thirty-six settlers were killed by natives, an equal number were enslaved, and, in one year, more than a quarter of the population died of fever. The lack of even a rudimentary sanitary science was as fatal as the muzzle-loader of the exasperated Arabs, and the dogged, even reckless, determination of the pioneers made them the easier victims. It was no wonder that General Duvivier voiced general opinion in 1841 in stigmatizing even the fertile Mitidja as “a place of sickness and death, a land of jackals and Arab bandits,” and, he might have added, the grave of foolish settlers and administrators who were paying for their almost insane folly with their lives. On the whole, the early settlement of Algeria found little favour with the officials, and was killed by the Arab insurrection of 1839–1840, by which time the official settlers included 316 families.<sup>77</sup>

It was not until Bugeaud's years that settlement received any real impetus, though his period (1841–1848) saw a great variety and scope of experiments. His basic policy was for military settlement,—“by

<sup>77</sup> Burdeau Report, 1892, p. 65. This early period is covered in two works by de Beaudicourt, 1856 and 1860.

sword and plough," "*Ense et aratro.*"<sup>78</sup> He wanted to people the Sahel with soldier-colonists, who were to have both the discipline of soldiers and the initiative of private settlers; the first would result in economy of effort and consistent action, and the latter would give them some tangible goal, something which would benefit them as individuals. The plan was to combine the benefits of a mechanical system with the resilience of individual effort, and was deemed to be especially suitable to the conditions of a land where the settler might at any instant have to take up his musket to defend his lands.

Unfortunately for the scheme, however, it had to become exclusively military or not at all so, because the contemplated merging of a settler in two functions, now soldier, now civilian, did not work; and gradually the element of compulsion came to the fore. Moreover, local opinion was hostile and the government mediocre, so that the promising scheme was nipped in the bud. The stress by this time was on free settlers, and something like a boom set in. In the single year of 1844, 46,000 settlers came, and, after the economic crisis which accompanied the revolution of 1848, some thousands of revolutionaries came to carefully prepared plots of land. Though they founded what are still the citadels of rural population (for instance, round Medea and Mostaganem), the results were disproportioned to the efforts, largely because of the unsuitability of many of the settlers and the lack of precaution against cholera: and, by some curious connection, the reverses came to involve a reaction against all assisted colonization.<sup>79</sup>

Neither the hasty settlement of the thirties, nor Bugeaud's experiments of the forties, nor the peasant-proprietorship idea of 1848, had succeeded, despite the varying degrees of State-aid in each: so that Napoleon III deemed that this experience was sufficient to demonstrate the economic absurdity of such an extension of State activities. Therefore, sales were introduced in 1860, and, three years later, the Emperor wrote that official colonization had failed beyond the possibility of doubt.<sup>80</sup> He held that there should be no small settlement under Algerian conditions and that the natives should do all the work of agriculture, with the Europeans only as *seigneurs* or *entrepreneurs*. This system, though it pertained at later dates in Tunisia and Indo-China, was, however, "ideological myopia" in so far as Algeria was concerned, with its climate and the natives. Nevertheless, Napoleon persisted in it, and, by a decree of December, 1864, absolutely forbade grants in the future. Sale without

<sup>78</sup> Examined at length in V. Démontès, *La Colonisation Militaire sous Bugeaud* (1917).

<sup>79</sup> de Peyerimhoff, Vol. I, p. 20 *et seq.*

<sup>80</sup> Letter of 6/2/63 to MacMahon, *Lettre sur la Politique française en Algérie.*

conditions was to be the exclusive method of alienation : that is, capitalists alone were to be attracted to the Algerian field, and with this went a notion of Arab serfdom,—so far had the “ Arab Kingdom ” idea been forgotten.

As events turned out, however, the new plan proved to be null and void. It was supposed to be an adaptation of the Wakefield plan to French conditions : “ It is the Wakefield plan,” wrote de Peyerimhoff in his monumental survey of Algerian settlement, “ transported intact from a new, empty, and limitless country, to an old country which is relatively limited and already occupied.”<sup>81</sup> In reality, it was nothing of the kind, for it lacked the essential concept of reserving the proceeds of land-sales for immigration or other public purposes. What the principle of 1864 stood for was a negation of State responsibility in settlement, and a reliance on unaided individual effort. The result was that the sixties saw a period of decline in Algeria. The forties had been the heyday of settlement, and even in the fifties, when official plans were more restrained, the general economic development had increased the rural population from 30,000 to 100,000. On the other hand, in the sixties, the position was not even maintained, and the agricultural population declined 10 per cent., for the cessation of grants had meant a practical ban on immigration.

That was the position when the Republic was proclaimed in 1870. Official colonization had once more sprung into popular favour as a result of the collapse of Napoleon III's schemes ; and there was a strong belief that grants meant population, while sales involved alienation without adequate return. There were 129,998 Frenchmen and 115,516 foreigners in Algeria, but only 90,000 resided in the rural districts. Settlement, which to 1856 had been limited to the coast, was now definitely going inland : already the high-plains were being settled, and progressive spirits were looking even to the first outskirts of the mountain *massif*.

But there was a spirit of uncertainty, of baffled effort, largely occasioned by the decline of the agricultural population under Napoleon III and by the series of famines and diseases after 1866 : and this indefinable *malaise* continued for almost a decade of the Republican period. Then, too, the Republicans pinned their faith to large schemes which were to transform the face of the land suddenly : the psychology of 1848 was revived, and naturally, when it did not square with the facts, disillusion and the consequent neglect of Algeria resulted. The Government sought to solve two of its difficulties at once : it had thousands of dispossessed Alsatians who had declared for the tricolour but who had nowhere to live, and it had Algeria where, for ten years at least, land had been

<sup>81</sup> de Peyerimhoff, Vol. I, p. 37.

abandoned, and the number of settlers declining. Why not join the two, take the surplus to the gap, and at once provide for French loyalists and allay the Algerian decline ?

In June, 1871, therefore, the National Assembly set aside 100,000 hectares of land in Algeria for loyalists.<sup>82</sup> French public opinion was once more inflamed about the land, and the pessimism was swept aside in a moment, and replaced by a zeal which was quite as irrational. This was not a mere economic experiment: it was Algeria *redivivus*, the growth of a new French race overseas, a ban on the cosmopolitan experiments of the sixties, an extension of the homeland, and the vindication of France! And what could mere economic facts avail against this laudable patriotic emotion? What happened was that 877 families were installed at a cost of £260 each; but they were installed, not on the land, but to swell an already over-large urban population. The results were clearly disappointing: the colonists were hopeless and mediocre, and practically drifted to small posts in retail-trade or the civil service. The best that could be said was that they provided "human capital" for the land, and that, if they failed in agriculture, that at least added to the French element in Algeria.

Part and parcel of the same optimism was the decree of September 30, 1878, which regulated settlement for twenty-six years, and under which the experiment known as "official colonization" proper took place.<sup>83</sup> This set up a system of conditional grants in official villages, and thus embodied the two basic concepts of Algerian land-policy,—grants to attract small settlers, and official control to prevent fraud. Land could be obtained free, on condition that the grantee resided on his block for three years and improved it to the extent of 100 francs per hectare. It was really the American homestead-system, save that the scope of selection was restricted to certain group-positions. Two factors accounted for the establishment of such a scheme in 1878: in this year, the individual and general sequestrations of rebel land were practically completed, and thus half a million hectares were lying idle for the administration to utilize: and, on the other hand, a hardier and more suitable class of settlers than the untrained Alsatians were at hand. *Phylloxera* had stricken the vines of France, and the vigneron, trained for generations in this culture, were looking for new fields of activity,—chiefly to the Mitidja lands, where the capabilities of vine-growing were even then being demonstrated. Every factor seemed to combine, but the most significant was the ineradicable hold of *phylloxera* in the Rhone valley: to this fact, more than to any other, was the effective settlement of Algeria in the eighties and nineties due. France's misfortune was

<sup>82</sup> de Peyerimhoff, Vol. I, p. 41 *et seq.*    <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 184 *et seq.*

Algeria's opportunity, and trained practical men came to build up a new staple and to make permanent the settlement of the rich northern Tell. Thus it was that, in the seventies and eighties, official colonization was at the height of its success, and the rural population increased to 198,985 persons,—and, what was more important than a mere increase in the aggregate, the population of Frenchmen was gaining on that of foreigners. There was not only *peuplement*, but a *peuplement* becoming increasingly national. In addition, the new settlers were not content to stop in the Tell, not daunted even by the Kabylie *massif*, but pushed on past the Atlas and attacked the Upper Plateaux, where the Roman remains showed what could be done and where the rapid development of the colony of Teheffa provided a model.

But, to counteract this forward movement, various difficulties emerged, especially the perennial shortage of land. The sequestrations had been mainly in the district between Algiers and Constantine, and were speedily absorbed, so that, by 1882, the public domain was restricted to 848,000 hectares, less than a ninth of which was suitable for purposes of settlement. The colonization of the seventies had absorbed 400,000 hectares, and there was little left. Accordingly, the idea of "expropriation" came to the fore: this was the first time the word had been used (*cantonnement*, a more discreet term, had been previously in use): and now it was put forward as the fundamental assumption on which Algerian settlement depended. A few inexorable facts made wholesale expropriation inevitable, unless there was to be stagnation, for the natives would neither sell nor utilize their land to the degree required.<sup>84</sup>

In April, 1881, therefore, the Waldeck-Rousseau Ministry advanced the famous "Fifty Millions" scheme, to utilize that number of francs in buying enough land for 15,000 new families. The rural population had increased 50 per cent. in the previous decade; the scheme of 1878 was in full swing; immigrants were offering as quickly as they could be absorbed; all that was lacking was land,—yet land, and good land, was there in abundance, locked up by what the French viewed as the prejudice of a truculent body of uneducated natives. The scheme of 1881 found strong support in Algeria and from the French Government; but it came to grief on that somewhat unreasoning strain of humanitarianism which was for ever cropping up, usually at particularly inauspicious moments, in French colonization. The Society for the Protection of Aborigines stepped into the breach and insisted that the proposed plan meant the practical annihilation of thousands of natives, who were to be forced back into the desert, resourceless, to make way for immigrants, and, if past experience counted for anything, for South Europeans and

<sup>84</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 30/5/79.

for persons already resident in Algeria. It was a death penalty by starvation for the dispossessed tribes, and, argued the reformers, more to swell the already swollen estates of Algerian landlords than anything else! They thus advanced two arguments,—that the scheme meant spoliation of the natives (for the proposed monetary compensation did not make up for the resultant disintegration), and that, moreover, it would be economically futile. But the first argument provided the real battle-ground and, because France did not want what was called “an Algerian Ireland,” the proposal was ultimately rejected in 1883.<sup>85</sup>

The result of this rebuff was a considerable slackening of official colonization, and, for a time, a general paralysis seemed to have attacked Algerian settlement. There were only 2,000 new colonists from 1881 to 1885, and the number was dwindling. Settlement appeared once more to be in a state of atrophy, and the theorists, having killed the grant-project of 1881, experimented in various directions. One d’Haussonville proposed what was really the Wakefield plan,—a million hectares to be sold, and the proceeds to go to the expenses of colonization: and the Government for its part dabbled with the idea of “a Colonization Bank and sales only” (because such banks had been useful in the sugar-islands), but the Bill took five years to pass the Senate and never reached the Deputies. Theory seemed to have lost itself in a maze of irrelevancies, but all the time, official colonization on the basis of conditional grants was proceeding, supplemented at times by sales. But the old vim of the late seventies found no counterpart at this date, and throughout the nineties, largely as a result of the official hesitancy, only 2,052 lots were granted, and the rural population actually declined to 189,164. The position was clearly undesirable, and whether because official colonization had been too closely adhered to, or because too many deviations from it had been sanctioned in the last few years, land-settlement was on the down-grade, for many years before the change of 1904 came about.<sup>86</sup>

Taking these decades as an entity, the question arises,—what were the actual results of official settlement? In the first place, it had led to a vast increase in the agricultural population. Whether this would have taken place independently of the policy, and whether it was secured in the cheapest possible and the most effective manner, are other questions: but the fact of an increased *peuplement* was undoubted. In 1871 barely 100,000 people were on the land in Algeria; twenty years later, there were 198,985. The intensive agriculture of the Mitidja plain was a

<sup>85</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 4/4/81; see debates in Deps., 16/11/83, 28-29/12/83. Rejected by 249 to 211.

<sup>86</sup> Labiche Report, 1896, *op. cit.* (see comment by Wahl in *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, 1/5/97); de Peyerimhoff, Vol. I, p. 52 *et seq.*

model for North Africa, there was a flourishing vine-industry, and the officially created villages had penetrated even to the Upper Plateaux. In them, 13,301 French families had been installed between 1871 and 1895, 42·5 per cent. of them from France itself, the rest from Algeria. The area they occupied covered 643,546 hectares, and 11,000 had obtained definitive or final titles. Only 5,184 of the original grantees, it is true, remained on the land ; but, taking into account their families and the new settlers who had taken the places of the others, the effective *peuplement* amounted to 54,314 persons. That is, 9,556 families had been installed for 81 million francs, and less than 3,000 of them from France ! There, in a nutshell, are the results of "official colonization."

CHART TO SHOW PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT IN ALGERIA

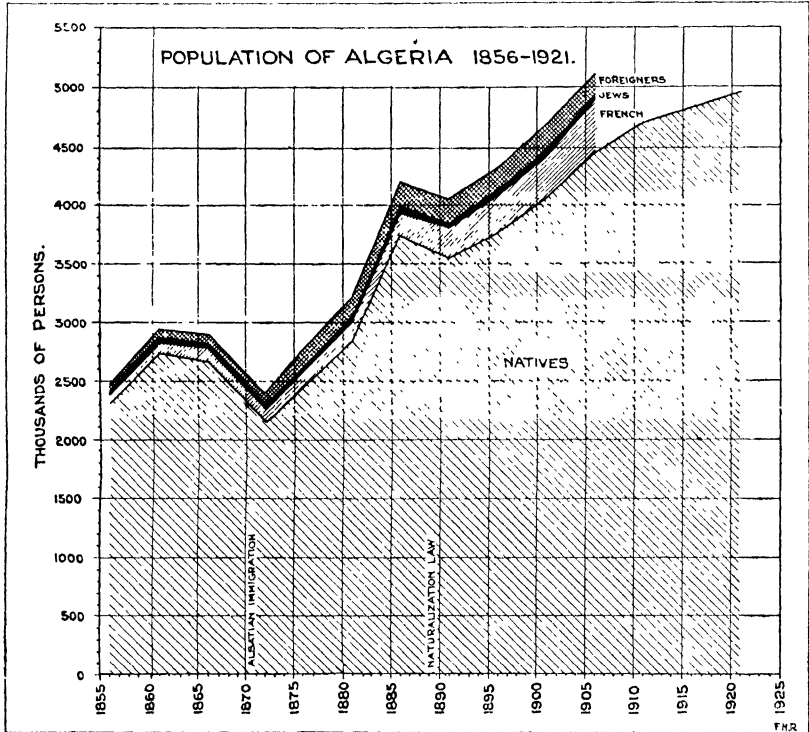
	Official Towns.	Grants.	Rural Population.	French.	Foreigners.
1831-1841. Initial experiments . . . . .	—	—	2,580	15,947	20,230
1841-1851. Boom . . . . .	126	15,000	40,913	65,497	65,233
1851-1861. Moderation . . . . .	85	11,000	44,045	103,322	76,330
1861-1871. Decline . . . . .	21	—	100,000	129,998	115,516
1871-1881. Moderate official colonization . . . . .	264	8,642 (lots)	145,710	195,418	181,354
1881-1891. Height of official colonization . . . . .	—	3,206	198,985	267,672	233,179
1891-1900. Stagnation of official settlement . . . . .	103	2,052	189,164	364,257	245,853

(Note the slow development of the rural population after 1871.)

De Peyerimhoff, in his detailed inquiry into the results of the experiment, concluded from these facts that "official colonization" had amply justified itself, for, while not minimizing the wasteful effort and the various unsatisfactory tendencies, he was convinced that the expenditure had been more than justified by the *peuplement* it had led to. According to him, a rural population was successfully installed,—artificially, it must be admitted, but none the less definitely: and, moreover, the official centres of colonization were so many nuclei for the spread of French influence,—“seminaries of our race,” and thus could do much to counteract the increasing influence of foreigners. This policy, he holds, had given Algeria a European population almost twice that of South Africa and two-thirds that of New Zealand. And, as a result, the conquest had been peaceful and definitive, and the economic development of the country precipitated. The effective rural population had

been increased or retarded in proportion to the adherence to, or the deviations from, the policy of "official colonization" and free-grants—and de Peyerimhoff purported to prove his contention by a detailed analysis of the statistics.<sup>87</sup>

But the weakness of his position was in attributing all increases in the period under review to the operation of the policy, thus minimizing or neglecting such spontaneous or natural development as may have been



going on at the same time, and independently of the official policy. He postulates a causal relationship between "official colonization" and the economic transformation of the country, ignoring the fact that much of the latter may have been independent of, or frankly in spite of, the former. A logical proposition cannot be inverted in this manner, for the predicate is more inclusive than the subject. He was justified in urging that rural population was stagnant during the imperial period of "economic (that is, free) colonization" (1862-1872) and rapidly increased in the first years of "official colonization" (1872-1882), because the optimism which

<sup>87</sup> de Peyerimhoff, Vol. I, pp. 201-202.

produced the increase of 58 per cent. in the latter period was part and parcel of the official scheme. But, beyond 1882, so complex were the many interactions and so diverse the factors affecting the situation that he cannot logically see cause and effect between the official policy and the economic progress of the country. Indeed, as the opposing school under Burdeau contended, the progress might have been achieved by the triumph of one set of factors over another, with "official colonization," partly, if not wholly, affecting progress adversely. In brief, the causes of the general progress were manifold, and could not be attributed, even in the bulk, to any one policy; the only general factor that could be adduced was a kind of *Zeitgeist*, a natural feeling that the fifty years of barren experiments had passed and that now was the time for consolidated advance.

Much criticism was directed at the official policy along these lines, especially during the reforming wave of the early nineties, when every sphere of Algerian activity was subjected to a ruthless, perhaps an unduly ruthless, analysis. The Burdeau Report of 1892, in particular, mustered the arguments of the reform school. Burdeau, who stood for solid and gradual reform on the old official lines, summed up in favour of the element of official control in the old scheme, but declared for sales as against grants. Free enterprise was to be fostered to a greater degree, and credits for colonization purposes to be commensurately reduced. He deprecated the prevalent inertia, the lapse of lands to local settlers as against immigrants, and the general inefficiency of the system: indeed, in the Deputies, he went further and called all settlement in Algeria "an abortive work."<sup>88</sup>

Going into details, the reformers held that the policy of "official colonization" was unreasonably costly. Burdeau, by neglecting the local settlers acquired, reached the figure of 15,000 francs for every French family installed on the land: Leroy-Beaulieu reduced this to 7,465·50 francs per family: de Peyerimhoff, by deducting such public works as would have been inevitable had the settlers not come (a somewhat dubious procedure), brought it as low as 1,000 francs a person. But, from his figure over the whole period, the cost per family effectively settled, whether immigrant or local, was really 8,494 francs. Seeing that there was practically no transportation-cost, this was unduly high, and de Peyerimhoff himself hastened to emphasize the inefficiency and the positive waste that characterized the whole period. The system was, by its nature, an extravagant one, and was made doubly so by the methods employed and the absence of effective checks, which in turn were due to the subordination of everything Algerian to the Paris *bureaux*.

<sup>88</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 5/12/91; Burdeau Report, 1892, pp. 62, 306.

Moreover, even putting aside this unsatisfactory financial aspect, the degree of successful settlement was very low. When 8,117 settlers of an original number of 13,301 either abandoned their lots or transferred their holdings, the upshot could not be termed successful, and still less so if it is remembered that the policy, especially aimed at attracting settlers from France, drew only 3,000 effective families of settlers altogether, and these mostly from the poor mountain-regions of the Cevennes, Dauphiny, and Savoy! There was far too much transfer both before getting the definite title (the failure to prevent this was an inexplicable defect) and after the title was once acquired; it is amazing to find that at least 62 per cent. of the holdings changed hands before the end of the probationary period.<sup>89</sup> Naturally, this placed a premium on the aggregation of large estates and afforded much justification for the plea of the reformers that "official colonization" in Algeria meant in the main facilities to transfer land from natives to settlers already in Algeria. The State, the natives, and the immigrants alike suffered: the Algerian Frenchmen gained. It was a fertile period for the land-speculator, and aggregation was completely unchecked.

Thus, on the whole, it is difficult to draw up a balance-sheet for this great experiment of the French in land-settlement. All that can with certainty be said is that the policy was successful before the questioning attitude of the late eighties, and undoubtedly did much to bring about the general optimism of that time regarding Algeria. But after then the adherence to a policy of grants seems anomalous, and the results for every franc expended diminished, until the policy came to mean a mere extravagance. Yet it cannot be said that this could altogether be attributed to the policy *as a policy*, because much of the blame must have been due to the inefficient methods of administration and to the procrastination of the central government, which, instead of adhering firmly to any one policy, was fluctuating between several, and thus giving adequate support to none. Taking all in all, however, it may be said that the policy of group-settlement was inevitable in Bugeaud's time and desirable in the seventies, but became increasingly needless after that time. The idea was due rather to native truculence than to the demands of public works, and thus pertained to the earlier period of Algerian history, but was meaningless when settlement was going to the Central Atlas, as it did in the nineties. A similar argument applies to the policy of free-grants, which may have been desirable when the colony was in its early stages and when inducements had to be held out to settlers, but which was both uneconomical and unwise when there was a regular scramble for the circumscribed areas that were available

<sup>89</sup> de Peyerinhoff, Vol. I, pp. 143-148; Vol. II, pp. 482, 581.

in the years after 1870. As soon as the tendency towards aggregation of properties set in, free-grants *ipso facto* became absurd. The both aspects of the system of "official colonization" had thus lost their supports by the late eighties, and the need was clearly for restrictions on speculative ventures and for a moderate preparation of public works to serve the needs of settlement.

The nature of the problem had changed : by 1903, there were 199,434 rural Europeans in Algeria, 104,420 of whom were French ; and this fact in itself testified to the needs of the new situation, and showed that the existing policies were anomalies. Settlement had progressed from the formative to the developmental period : the chrysalis was no longer a grub, but, if not a butterfly, at least a moth, and was demanding different food from that which it used to have. The premises of the situation had changed, and the argument had to conform itself to the newer facts. Indeed, the change was long overdue, and that accounts for the wrong attribution of many flaws to "official colonization," flaws which were involved in its operation in these latter days, but which were by no means its necessary concomitants. They arose because the policy was applied after there was any need for it, and naturally they were looked on as arising from it. In short, just as many advantages not due to "official colonization" were attributed to it, so now, in its later stages, many defects, not inherently part of it, came to be linked up with it. "Official colonization" had run its course, and, while this did not imply that colonists in the new *régime* could be dumped down in the Central Atlas and left to their own resources, it at least meant that the Government's position was to be, if not diminished, certainly on different lines.

The truth of the situation seemed to be somewhere between the attitudes of de Peyerimhoff and Burdeau, but nearer the latter than the former ; therefore, some change was inevitable. This was produced by a decree of September, 1904, which changed the whole system of Algerian land-settlement and which still remains in operation. The reports of the various Commissions of Burdeau (1892), Jonnart (1892), and Labiche (1896) had clearly shown the faults of free-grants, hence the decree of 1904 decided for sale as the rule and for grants only in certain exceptional cases.<sup>90</sup> To favour personal residence, rebates were given to those settlers who themselves resided on the land, and, to prevent the previous monopolization by Algerian residents, two-thirds of all land was reserved for immigrants. To eradicate the speculators, the period of residence was extended to ten years, although there was still no ban on transfer during the probationary period and thus no real check imposed.

<sup>90</sup> *Journal Officiel*, 14/9/04 ; de Peyerimhoff, Vol. I, p. 67.

More emphasis was placed on preventing land going back to the natives than on preventing aggrandizement; and the system did not provide effective prevention of abuse so much as hindrances that could be surmounted. Still, by giving priority to sales, it was a distinct advance on its predecessor of 1878, and the existence of even limited checks was an improvement. The new decree was elastic and, at the Governor-General's discretion, could be interpreted in various ways to meet differing situations; the old one had been rigid and inflexible.

In theory, the new policy aimed at helping a spontaneous colonization which, as Burdeau showed, had produced better results than the artificial settlement of the official policy; but, in practice, the new differed little from the old. The Algerian Government still firmly believed in the necessity of creating villages as forerunners of settlement, and the formation of isolated farms by enterprising individuals was still anathema to them. It was held that the presence of the Arabs on "five-sixths of the land that should belong to the State" made inevitable the preliminary steps of first defining the *douars* (tribal units) and then instituting a group-settlement at a desirable spot. Even in places like the expanding Sersou, where the settlers needed no official aid, it was stated that "the Algerian administration considers the preparation of villages as an indispensable part of its rôle, at the same time as the delimitation of the *douars*": and the facts of the situation and the arguments of economists like Leroy-Beaulieu availed not at all against this fixed conviction. Settlement in Algeria had always been by means of official villages: settlement in Algeria *would* always be by means of official villages: and that was all there was to the situation.<sup>91</sup>

Moreover, grants still remained a prominent feature of the land-policy: it seemed that a breach with the policy that had always been associated with Algeria could not be lightly effected. Consequently, between 1901 and 1907, there were only 430 lots sold to 2,504 granted, so that the new system simply resolved itself into the old one, with the addition of a few sales and a few safeguards that were not in themselves unassailable. The expected elasticity had not been given a chance: relatively twice as large an area as before was sold—that was the only change either in method or direction.

In practice, therefore, there was curiously little advance on the earlier systems, and, if the decree of 1878 was anomalous in the years before 1904, still more so was that of 1904 in the changing conditions of this century. Attention was now on the Upper Plateaux, the regions of dry-farming, and conditions here were quite different from down in the

<sup>91</sup> Piquet (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 204. Results are analysed in E. Garcin, *La Colonisation Officielle en Algérie sous le Régime du décret du 13 Septembre, 1904* (1913).

Tell and in fertile regions like the Mitidja coastal-plain. Clearly a new and vigorous policy was called for to meet the new situation, yet the administration, hampered, it is true, by the general financial problems of the war-period, gave only a lifeless continuation of the earlier policies. Up to 1922, 57,319 hectares were granted and 136,856 hectares sold under the decree of 1904, but, in all, this alienation affected only 2,345 families. The administration claims that this result is satisfactory under the abnormal conditions, and that the institution of seventy-nine new villages and the enlargement of seventy-seven old ones were all that could be expected during a period of travail in every direction.<sup>92</sup>

But there was another side to the situation. Land was passing more and more from the colonists to the natives, and the centres of colonization were becoming depopulated. In certain regions, according to the Council-General, the recent gubernatorial surveys were of dead or moribund villages: one colonist held up the procession at Mila by crying, "Voilà! I am the last of the forty El-Malah colonists. And, if you come back next year, you will no longer find me. For I shall be gone, because the administration refuses to help me find the water necessary for my food!" The legislation of 1904 is quite inadequate now, and the Council-General continually attacks the conservative attitude of the Government in interpreting it. The provision of a scope for elasticity has been unavailing, and it is evident that the decree of 1904 has resulted in a crisis of settlement, aggravated by the protracted drought after 1921.

The French settlement of Algeria cannot thus be termed a success. It is true that 200,000 rural settlers are in the land after a century of effort, but the cost has been disproportionately large, and there is an ominous drift from the country-districts. Frenchmen will not emigrate there, and capitalists are chary. The natives have been dispossessed in most of the country, but have been allowed to amass land in Kabylie, and in the main present a more formidable obstacle than ever to agricultural stability and advance. In a predominantly agricultural country, where the vagaries of the weather impart an ever-present element of uncertainty, this position has led to a state of constant crisis, and imposes so heavy a handicap that it is difficult to see how the country can rise, especially in view of the serious droughts and the general economic crisis of the post-war period.

Always, too, there is the problem of the natives divorced from their land,—“And when, in the face of the need of the new French race in Africa for expansion, we will see the native race multiply, detached from the soil and forcibly impoverished and powerless to transform itself overnight into a working population as it is, we will ask whether French

<sup>92</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Dec., 1923, p. 627.

colonization has not perhaps been a little precipitate." These lines were written by a colonial expert in 1912.<sup>93</sup> The position still holds, save that the promising structure of dry-farming that Piquet foretold on the Upper Plateaux has been practically stillborn, and the later crises have placed the European settlers in as grave a state as the natives. Agricultural Algeria consists of two disgruntled sections in a land always liable to severe droughts and without any adequate credit-facilities.<sup>94</sup> In this manner the artificial nature of French settlement there is bearing its fruit: the element of spontaneity, with its corollary of permanence, has always been lacking, and thus there has been little resilience, little power of recovery, and little adaptability with which to face and override the physical difficulties and the financial crises in a modern French colony. A Commission appointed in 1921 to investigate the problem thus found the position not only as it had been in the time of Burdeau and Jonnart, not only stagnant, but actually retrogressive, and with an additional feeling of depression foreign to the earlier periods of optimism. Algeria has swung back, and the whole problem has to be faced afresh.

### V. Problems of the Foreign Populations

One of the basic facts in Algerian matters was for long the disinclination of Frenchmen to leave their mother-country. Even when Algeria was being settled in the seventies, France had far less emigration, proportionately speaking, than any other European country. This was accounted for largely by the general equilibrium of French life: the diversity of cultures and climates and occupations was an economic safeguard, and provided scope for the great mass of Frenchmen at home, especially after 1871, when the population commenced to decline. There could be no upheaval in such a self-sufficient country as a potato-famine could occasion in Ireland or a metal crisis in Westphalia, or a cotton-failure in England. Add to this a natural disinclination of the Frenchman to change his accustomed mode of existence, and the chain is complete.<sup>95</sup> Thus it was that for long, practically the only immigrants to Algeria came from the poorer provinces of the Midi (Marseilles, Provence, Languedoc) and Corsica: here alone economic pressure exerted an inexorable influence, and, by shutting off hope, exercised a thrusting-out influence. The more stabilized districts in other parts scarcely felt

<sup>93</sup> Aynard (1912), *op. cit.*, pp. 253-254; Piquet (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 208.

<sup>94</sup> For the antagonism of sections, see the debate in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 1/6/01, after the Margueritte crisis.

<sup>95</sup> de Peyerimhoff, Vol. I, p. 12. The emigration-figures per thousand of population (1872-1881) were: France, 2; Germany, 5.5; Great Britain, 5.2; Italy, 4.0; Norway, 4.2.

the appeal of Algeria, except in such periods of unreasoning emotion as 1848 and the seventies.<sup>96</sup> Save in these periods, when an ebullient patriotism and the liberalism of revolution joined to direct mass-movements towards Algeria, the Frenchman tended either to remain tranquilly at home or to join his fellows in Lower Canada or the La Plata region.

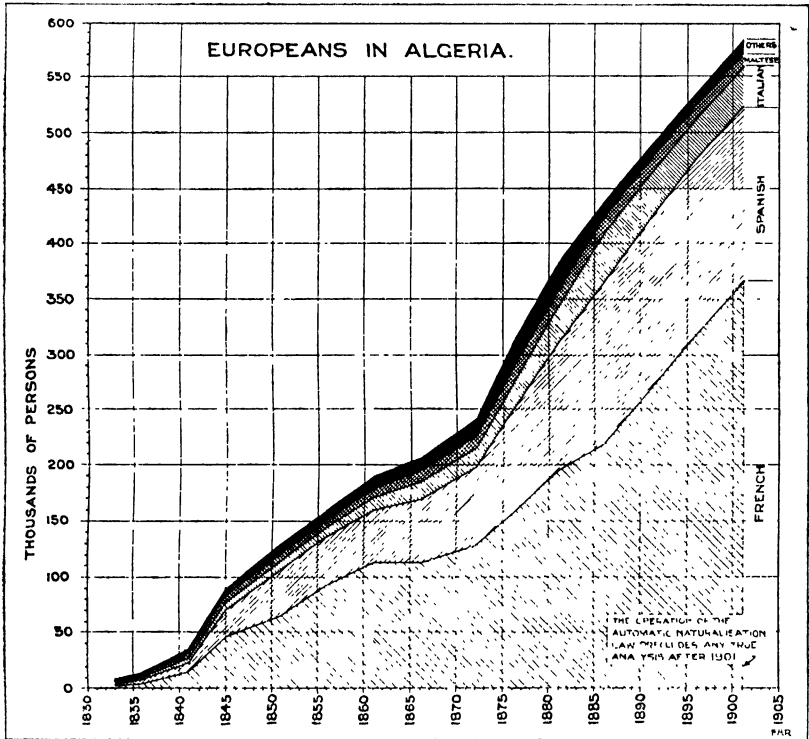
Matters were not aided, either, by the desultory attitude of the State, which now unduly promoted emigration (as at the time of the official villages in the seventies) and then hindered it. At one time (1857) 80,000 persons were sent precipitately to Algeria, and 70,000 had to be repatriated; and, at another, not sufficient inducements were held out. Everything, therefore, conspired to make Algeria depend on other than French supplies of "human capital."

Up till 1865 the death-rate had invariably exceeded the birth-rate, and it was thought that French and Germans did not prosper in the Algerian climate, and that only Italians and Spanish could acclimatize themselves. Indeed, the Southern Europeans increased more rapidly in Algeria than in their respective mother-lands, and, because both health and opportunity were offered, the foreigners poured in,—the Spaniards because the fare was only five *pesetas*, and the Italians because the economic *risorgimento* of the latter nineteenth century did not include Sicily and the south. From 1876 at least, therefore, there began a contest between French and South Europeans as to which should be numerically in the ascendant in Algeria, the increases being as follows:—

	French.	European Foreigners.	Spaniards.	Italians.
1833 . . .	3,478	4,334	1,291	1,122
1836 . . .	5,485	9,076	4,592	1,845
1841 . . .	15,497	20,230	9,748	3,528
1846 . . .	46,339	49,780	25,335	7,730
1851 . . .	67,433	65,549	41,558	7,555
1856 . . .	92,738	66,544	42,218	9,442
1861 . . .	112,229	80,517	48,145	11,815
1866 . . .	112,119	95,871	58,510	16,655
1871 . . .	129,601	115,516	71,366	18,351
1876 . . .	155,368	155,072	92,510	25,759
1881 . . .	195,418	181,354	114,320	33,693
1886 . . .	219,627	205,212	144,530	44,315
1891 . . .	267,672	215,793	151,859	30,161
1896 . . .	318,137	211,580	157,560	35,529
1908 . . .	364,257	219,587	155,265	43,871

<sup>96</sup> Map in *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, 1/9/00.

But this table does not show the real state of affairs, and, taking into account the number of naturalizations (128,925 in the figure of 1901 alone), it becomes clear that, at every census after 1832 at least, there were more foreigners than Frenchmen in Algeria. In 1896, for instance, when the census-figure ostensibly showed a 50 per cent. predominance of Frenchmen, there were really only 268,870 Frenchmen as compared with 375,138 foreigners; Spaniards dominated in many of the Oran



communes and in many parts of the department of Algiers. So too, in 1906, the census showed 449,420 Frenchmen, but, of these, only 278,976 were French-born either in France or Algeria, and the total number of foreigners was 336,642, not counting the 64,645 Jews. The enfranchisement *en masse* of the Jews by the Crémieux decree of 1870 and the operation of the automatic-naturalization law of 1889 were both utilized to obscure the real situation and artificially swell the numbers of Frenchmen; but the device was apparent, and the basic fact could not be concealed that, in these decades, Algeria had far more foreigners than Frenchmen. Thus, there was a very real foreign menace, and it was not only one of

numbers, because the foreign groups largely maintained their separate organization and traditional cultures.

Of the various foreign elements the Spanish has always been the most noticeable, and, indeed, arguing from the 1906 census, they were almost as numerous as the French, especially in the westerly province of Oran, which was their special camping-ground. They came to Algeria from the Mediterranean provinces and Andalusia, practically half of them originating in Alicante.<sup>97</sup> The agricultural crisis and the political commotions from 1870 to 1876 gave an impetus to their migration, and it is significant that practically none came from Castile. There is a general agreement as to their characteristics. Clearly they have proven the European type most suited for Algerian conditions, even more so than the Frenchmen of the Midi. They are almost as turbulent as the natives in many cases, and keep their original rusticity to a greater degree than is usual with the other ethnic elements: their *pepe* or proprietors are really slow and quaintly conservative herders, knowing little and caring little of advance or outside conditions. They are essentially a rural and static element,—useful workers, sober and resistant. In their attitude towards France they are non-committal. Obviously they do not like France and do everything to retain their own local ideas and organizations. They make practically no effort to assimilate the French culture of Algeria, but stand aside, inert and reactionary. On the other hand, they are not separatist or anti-social in their attitude. They are loyal to a “Spanish legend,” but are not prepared to carry their love of the past to the stage of trying to revive it in the present form of evolution. As Louis Bertrand showed in *Le Sang des Races*, they avoid present problems by keeping their feet deep-rooted in a more or less mythical past. They view the past through rose-coloured spectacles and idealize a Spain which they were glad enough to leave a few years before, yet which they divest of all its rudeness and harshness: it is all a pleasant dream, and they do not wish it to be shattered any more than, under precisely similar conditions, a Japanese in Hawaii, revelling in an æsthetic dissipation by idealizing his home-country, desires to have his illusions shattered by the reality of returning to Japan. The Spaniards in Algeria are content to love a false Spain of yesterday, a chimera, and this gives brightness to their lives and enables them to maintain their social integrity in the new country. But that is all; their dream is a cement of society, not the basis of a revolutionary programme. There is thus no *irridentism*, and they stand aside in their own cultural past, or rather, the cultural

<sup>97</sup> V. Démontès, *Le Peuple Algérien* (1906), pp. 59, 91, 522–523; Wahl (1897), *op. cit.*, pp. 233–234. Cp. article by Déchaud in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Oran*, 1908, p. 51.

past as they have moulded it in their own imaginations, and give to Algeria, not leaders or programmes, but only—their flocks! So that, although a humorist said, with much justice, that Algeria is the one Spanish colony that has succeeded, the Spanish colony there is a social *enclave* within a wider unity, but not as distinct from that unity. The Spanish menace, therefore, because of this peculiarly mixed and tranquil psychology, is not as real as the numerical position would seem to imply, nor is it a menace at all, so much as a problem.

With the Italians in Constantine, the difficulty is very much more real, although their numbers are less than a fourth those of the Spaniards in the West.<sup>98</sup> The trouble is that the Italians in Algeria are but a continuation of the extremely self-assertive *bloc* of their fellows in Tunisia, where they are in a majority. So that the question of the Algerians in Algeria must be viewed as part of the wider problem of the Italians along the North African littoral, the more so as there is a common bond of violent *irridentism* between them all,—a bond that is distinctly anti-French. The Italians are not only a distinct element, like the Spaniards: they have also been a disintegrating one, in a manner never shared by the more numerous Spaniards. The Spaniards are devotees of a semi-mythical past which probably never existed and which is certainly nothing to inspire concrete policies of to-day; whereas the Italians love the Italy of to-day and the irridentist Italy of to-morrow, and work for a time when Tripolitania (Libya) will include the whole North African seaboard. They are frankly separatist, and their separatism is rendered coherent by a distinct political programme. While the Spaniards are culturally and quiescently separatist, the Italians, as a mass, are politically and aggressively so.<sup>99</sup>

Practically all of the Italians come from the south, except the contingents from the over-populated Tuscany. The poorer provinces of Sicily, Calabria, and Campania were the most fertile recruiting-grounds, especially for fishermen and labourers; a few farmers came from Sardinia and miners from Lombardy, but the great majority were South Italians.<sup>100</sup> Their characteristics are very different from those of the Spaniards in Algeria; they are not so resistant physically; few of them become "patrons" or proprietors; what is the rule with the Spaniard is the exception with them, and, on the whole, they are good workmen but poor peasants, and drift naturally to filling the urban demand for skilled labour. But, above all, they are a noisy and dissident political *bloc*.

<sup>98</sup> G. Loth, *Le Peuplement italien en Algérie et en Tunisie* (1905), p. 33 *et seq.*

<sup>99</sup> Démentès (1906), *op. cit.*, p. 525.

<sup>100</sup> See maps in *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, 1/9/00, and article by Mandeville and Démentès in 15/8/00. Cp. Lorin (1908), *op. cit.*, p. 65.

The presence of these hundreds of thousands of Spaniards and Italians not unnaturally occasioned much disquietude throughout the closing decades of last century, and, in the intervals between the anti-Semite campaigns, there was considerable anti-foreign agitation. Writers like Lenormand spoke of "*Le Péril Étranger*," and experienced statesmen agreed with Burdeau in saying that the whole future of French Algeria was at stake. "Whatever signs of prosperity our colony appears to give otherwise," ran a much-quoted passage in the Burdeau Report of 1892, "if the French do not become sufficiently numerous to outnumber the other elements, we are dubious of its future." Again: "It is not enough that the European element increase in Algeria; in it, the French must predominate."<sup>101</sup> And this voiced the general feeling. It was a distinct menace, it was argued, to have separate language-schools for the foreigners, to have the Spaniards gradually coming to control politics in Oran province, and to have the Italians capturing every trade and linking their efforts with their Tunisian compatriots. It was not spectacular but a symptom of a grave disease to have Oran soldiers in French uniform yet knowing no language but Spanish, or to have a rising at Thala (1906) quelled by Italian workers led by a Frenchman. These things were serious, the more so because the various elements showed no sign of becoming absorbed in one wider entity.

The elements remained separate, and, rejoicing in their distinctness, rejected French overtures to lessen the gap between them. For instance, there was practically no naturalization. In all the years between 1866 and 1904, only 5,683 Europeans were naturalized—the sign of an aloofness which was ended when the law of 1889 made naturalization automatic and collective. By this means the number of French citizens was to be swollen, and the third generation of foreigners at least to come under a more immediate French influence. That the measure of 1889 was solely to this end and imposed in direct opposition to the views of those concerned was evident, because, in 1886, only 82 out of a total mass of 144,530 Spaniards, and 203 out of 44,315 Italians were naturalized.

Then, too, given the numbers involved and the shortage of women with the immigrant-stocks, there was curiously little intermarriage. In the forty-seven years after 1830, Doctor Ricoux, the demographic expert, found only 6,881 cases of foreigners marrying French citizens, and Démontès proved that this state of affairs held up to the time of his investigations in 1905.<sup>102</sup>

As a result of the two foregoing tendencies, it is only natural to pre-

<sup>101</sup> Burdeau Report, 1892, pp. 31, 37.

<sup>102</sup> Démontès (1906), *op. cit.*, pp. 543, 214–215. Cp. *L'Afrique Française*, July, 1923, p. 397, for continuance of this.

suppose a great degree of localism, and it is precisely this inordinate localism which has always characterized North Africa. "North Africa," it has been said, "is a country of division, and especially of regional opposition"; provincial egotism reigns everywhere, and the greatest difficulty in the way of communal advance is this intestine division. The Boisserin inquiry of 1900 reported "that there exists in Algeria the germs of an undeniable and avowedly particularist spirit," and this remark applied as much to each province as to the entity. Algeria seemed to be splitting into three sections, each a distinct province. Oran was clearly a Spanish colony, Algiers a French stronghold, and Constantine a prolongation of "Italian Tunisia." The differences between these provinces, supported as they were by geography, seemed far stronger than the bonds between them, and the only cohesion was by the common wall of recalcitrant natives in the interior.

On the other hand, certain optimistic features could be discerned. In the first place, the emergence of an all-Algerian particularism, as against the mere provincial separatism, was a hopeful sign, at least in that it was based on a postulate of Algerian unity. A sign of this was said to be the emergence of "a neo-French race" in Algeria, a race distinct from the French of the mainland, and influenced both by the Algerian environment and the various ethnic elements in the country. "In the amalgamation which is taking place, the French blood represents the intellectual yeast, the *bouquet*; and the blood of the Latin races is bringing to the ultimate type a physique better suited to the Southern climate, greater resistance and less *finesse*." <sup>103</sup>

French spirit and Mediterranean physique,—that is how France views the change: Réclus goes even further and predicts "an Algerian race" with the above components and Arab and Berber elements in addition. However this may be, there is no doubt that a distinct Algerian type, a distinct Algerian mentality, is emerging; and the difference between an Algerian colonist of the Upper Plateaux and a Parisian is more marked than that between a Riverina bushman of Australia and a Londoner.

Then, too, it is recognized that Algeria is not alone in possessing various racial *enclaves*. Why complain of the Italians of Constantine when Nice and Toulon and Marseilles and Tourcoing are becoming less and less French,—when Marseilles alone has 100,000 Italian-born foreigners and at least an equal number of first and second generation children, to whom the automatic operation of the law of 1889 has given French nationality? And, as Jaurès said in defending the bitterly attacked Crémieux decree of 1870, it is "the worst moral failure" for a country like France to admit that 50,000 Jews could not be incorporated

<sup>103</sup> Lorin (1908), p. 381; de Peyerimhoff, Vol. I, pp. 171-173.

within the national spirit,—and a similar argument applies, only with more force, to the Spanish and Italians.<sup>104</sup> By that, he meant that France has a cultural preponderance and that she could readily assimilate the extraneous elements which were not in themselves unassimilable, and of whom the Spanish at least, far and away the most important element numerically, were not opposed to such a consummation. In addition, it must be remembered that such problems are not concerned only with statistics; were that so, life in some of the confused racial *enclaves* of the Balkans or in an ethnographical laboratory like Hawaii would be clearly impossible. It is the spirit and prestige of the various elements in the community that count even more than their respective numbers, and here the French emerge well. France has practically an unquestioned economic and social preponderance in Algeria, and, even if we conclude with Démontès that her numerical preponderance is “seriously menaced,” this fact more than counteracts the numerical loss. Thus, on the whole, it can be said that there is an ever-present problem in Algeria, and that it is potentially a menace, if French policy should develop on such lines as to foster the conversion of the cultural separatism of the foreigners into a political separatism,—and this is why the Italians are a danger and the Spaniards only a difficulty.

The passage of the years in nowise lessens the difficulty, save in the census-reports, which are practically useless for showing the situation, except as between Europeans and natives. But, even according to the census, the utility of which is largely vitiated by the naturalization law of 1889, and since 1919, by the wholesale admission of native Algerians to the privileges of French citizenship, the position has been as follows:—

	Natives.	French.	European Foreigners.	Spaniards.	Italians.	Jews.
1906 . .	4,477,788	449,420	166,198	144,328	31,927	64,645
1911 . .	4,711,276	562,931*	189,112	135,150	36,795	70,271
1921 . .	4,971,424	405,208	192,159	144,328	31,927	73,967

\* Including Jews.

It should be noted, too, that already in 1906, a third of the so-called Frenchmen were foreigners or Jews, and there is no reason to suppose that the entries through the naturalization gate have been diminishing since then: rather would the automatic process gather more with the passage of the years. At present, then, it is impossible to disentangle

<sup>104</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 20/2/98.

the Algerian census-returns, although it must be emphasized that the position is not that represented in the official statistics.

Algeria's race-problems are very real, although, apart from the anti-Semitic agitations, it is astonishing how little racial friction there has been. The position at present is that the various elements agree to differ: and it would be folly either to ignore these differences or to attempt a hasty assimilation to one standard (moreover, it is not known what would be the standard in such a hypothetical case,—French or Franco-Algerian or a blended French-Mediterranean culture?): the only *via media* is to recognize and allow certain differences of culture, and even of organization, so long as they do not become anti-social or inimical to the central power. As Governor-General Jonnart, with his forty years of Algerian experience, said in opening the *Délégations Financières* in 1919<sup>105</sup>:

“We cannot nourish the illusion of creating a common soul in Algeria. But we have the duty and the wish to let diverse races live side by side, and prosper by means of the association of interests, which will augment individual relations, lessen prejudices, and lead to generations better able to understand and more desirous of a true accord.”

This position neither minimizes the difficulties nor disguises the existing rancour: yet, on the other hand, it allows a gradual evolution on the lines of the policy of *association*, which the French have adopted in dealing with native races. In brief, it is development along the lines of Waldeck-Rousseau's famous maxim of 1901,—that, wherever there is difference in culture and tradition and organization and ideals, the best solution of the difficulty is for a healthy parallel development of the various civilizations, each on its own lines, and to the utmost degree compatible with general social security. That is the only way, short of domination by one element, of reconciling the various races in Algeria.

## VI. Economics

Algeria is primarily an agricultural country, and even then of a very definite nature. Her development is very limited in its scope. Industry is practically non-existent: there were only 23,584 workers in factories in 1917, and, despite the development of the woollen industry between Kabylie and M'Zab in the last few years, there seems little to be hoped for in the way of an indefinite expansion along these lines. Coal is completely lacking, and the country provides only iron and copper and phosphates. Everything, therefore, by this process of elimination, comes to depend on agriculture,—on the production of vines and temperate cereals. Even the potentialities in that direction are strictly

<sup>105</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, May-June 1919.

limited by various inexorable factors. The supply of good land or even utilizable land is a small proportion of the whole, for the desert and the mountains limit it to a coastal strip which, to all intents and purposes, cannot pass the Upper Plateaux.<sup>106</sup> Much of such land as would be available, too, has been locked up by the native-policy of the past and cannot be released for purposes of settlement without violent native opposition.

At this point the climate plays a hand, for Algeria has always been subject to severe and protracted droughts, which paralyse the country's activities for a period of years. To make matters worse, in a country like the Dry-lands of Utah or the Australian Mallee, where dry-farming and capitalistic methods are called for to reduce the inequality of the struggle as decreed by Nature, agriculture is, on the contrary, notoriously backward, and, as far as the natives are concerned, still in the patriarchal stage. Capital is chary of the colony, which was for long regarded as a treacherous desert eagerly mopping up outside capital and leaving the desert-sands as unruffled as before : and the labour-position was equally unsatisfactory, for there were never more than from four to five million aloof natives, and the Spaniards and Italians stuck respectively to their flocks and the cities.

As a result of the total of these limiting factors, Algerian development has been within certain well-marked limits, and any attempt to transcend the boundaries decreed by Nature, as during the boom of the seventies or the optimism of 1911 or the unusual conditions of the war-period, inevitably brought a reaction, and a more than equivalent payment.

The country is thus a limited agricultural region, with many factors obscuring the advantages conferred by its temperate climate and its proximity to France. Practically every feature of its economic life is on a farming basis, and the agricultural situation is always the *primum mobile* of matters Algerian. In 1920, for instance, even after a succession of prosperous years, a bad crop meant deficits in the budgets of 1920 and 1921, because the yield of taxation varied directly with rural prosperity : trade and commerce declined and the banking crisis was aggravated : and even the general political *malaise* was intensified. For at least four years the normal trend of evolution was rudely shattered,—another reminder of the country's dependence on a single line of activity, and the constant element of uncertainty, and almost menace, implied in that dependence.<sup>107</sup>

Because of this situation, the country depends on producing crops and transporting them to their markets. On the one hand, therefore,

<sup>106</sup> de Peyerimhoff, Vol. I, p. 116, note.

<sup>107</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Feb. 1922, p. 106.

Algeria's destiny depends on an adequate supply of labour and credit and a comparative absence of droughts (there can never be an absolute freedom from this scourge, the land being what geography has made it), and, on the other, on railways and shipping. Indeed, the two latter, owing to the various peculiarities of French policy in this regard, are far more important in reality than a theoretical argument would have us suppose, especially in the case of shipping, where the laws providing for a French monopoly have imposed grave limits on the already limited list of potentialities. And, as for railways, Gabriel Hanotaux has said with justice that "all Algerian questions lose themselves in railways, like rivers in the sea." Given the bounds imposed by Nature, Algerian matters thus come down to problems of production and problems of transportation, and it is a significant commentary on the country's position, both past and present, that most of the discussion on these matters is in terms of difficulties and not advantages.

The general development of the colony, and incidentally the difficulties perennially encountered, are best shown in a survey of the external commerce, for which the data is very full. The most striking feature in this connection is that Algeria has never had a permanently favourable trade-balance,—and this in a country in which the total amount of exports has been the gauge of the country's prosperity. In an agricultural country which depends on the world-market and which imports all of its manufactured goods, the predominance of exports over imports is the measure of the country's credit-balance: to suppose the contrary would be to have its debts greater than its receipts, save in those early years of a colony when there are unusual imports of materials of construction for public works. Once established, however, a solely agricultural colony, with a small resident population, should have its agricultural exports increasingly in excess of its manufactured imports. Yet Algeria has in the main known practically the reverse. Until 1904, exports were invariably below imports, save in the exceptional years of 1872–1873.<sup>108</sup> In all, even taking into account the war-years, when the unrestricted market favoured Algerian agricultural produce, the colony has had only ten years with a favourable trade-balance. And the lesson pointed to is the more real, because Algeria is not a country like Indo-China where external trade reflects only one side of the situation and where an abnormal amount of internal commerce, due largely to the presence of an overwhelming native population, has to be taken into account. The external trade of Algeria, on the other hand, is of itself practically a barometer of the country's position, for Algeria

<sup>108</sup> L. Lusinski, *Étude sur les Relations commerciales et maritimes entre l'Algérie et la France* (1922), p. 27.

sells mainly, almost exclusively, in outside markets and buys from them.

The general development of Algerian trade may be seen from the table :—

	Imports.	Exports.
	(Millions of Francs.)	
1830-1840 (av.)	15	2·1
1841-1850 (av.)	71·9	3·7
1851-1860 (av.)	80·8	31·1
1861-1870 (av.)	172·6	81·6
1878 . . .	236	131·6—note increased imports.
1882 . . .	411·9	150·0—abnormal imports for South Oran rising.
1886 . . .	221·1	196·4—decline of “ official colonization.”
1890 . . .	—	— —falling-off of public works.
1894 . . .	283·1	245·7
1898 . . .	302·2	285·7
1902 . . .	332·7	315·0
1906 . . .	424·9	303·8—after the droughts.
1910 . . .	543·1	544·9—equilibrium.
1914 . . .	566·8	427·6

From this it will be seen that there was a steady, if slow, development of exports, and a fluctuating import trade, dependent on the amount of public works at the time and on the prosperity or otherwise of the immediately preceding agricultural seasons. In the main, however, a normal position pertained after the boom of public works in the heyday period of “ official colonization ” (1875-1886), and, although the quietness after 1904 partook largely of the nature of stagnation, it was at least natural, and the country was gradually developing. After the setback of various prolonged droughts, this stagnation changed to a somewhat more rapid progress, and, by 1914, exports in normal years were coming fairly close to imports. Stabilization of a favourable balance, if not achieved, was in sight, and the exception heretofore (having been known only in six years) promised to become the rule. If limited, development was becoming healthier, and it must always be remembered that, in a pre-eminently agricultural country of this type, rapid or cataclysmic advance is a sign of weakness rather than the contrary, for in such cases it is the quiet progressive consolidation that counts. It must be admitted, however, that the increase in trade was disappointingly slow. In 1882, Leroy-Beaulieu had forecast a commerce of 1,000 million francs in 1890 and 2,000 million in 1900, whereas, in reality, the totals were less than 546 and 566 millions, and, in the intervening period, there had been neither expansion nor even a changed proportion of exports and imports within the total. Under the circumstances, taking into account the increased population, this was tantamount to retrogression, the more

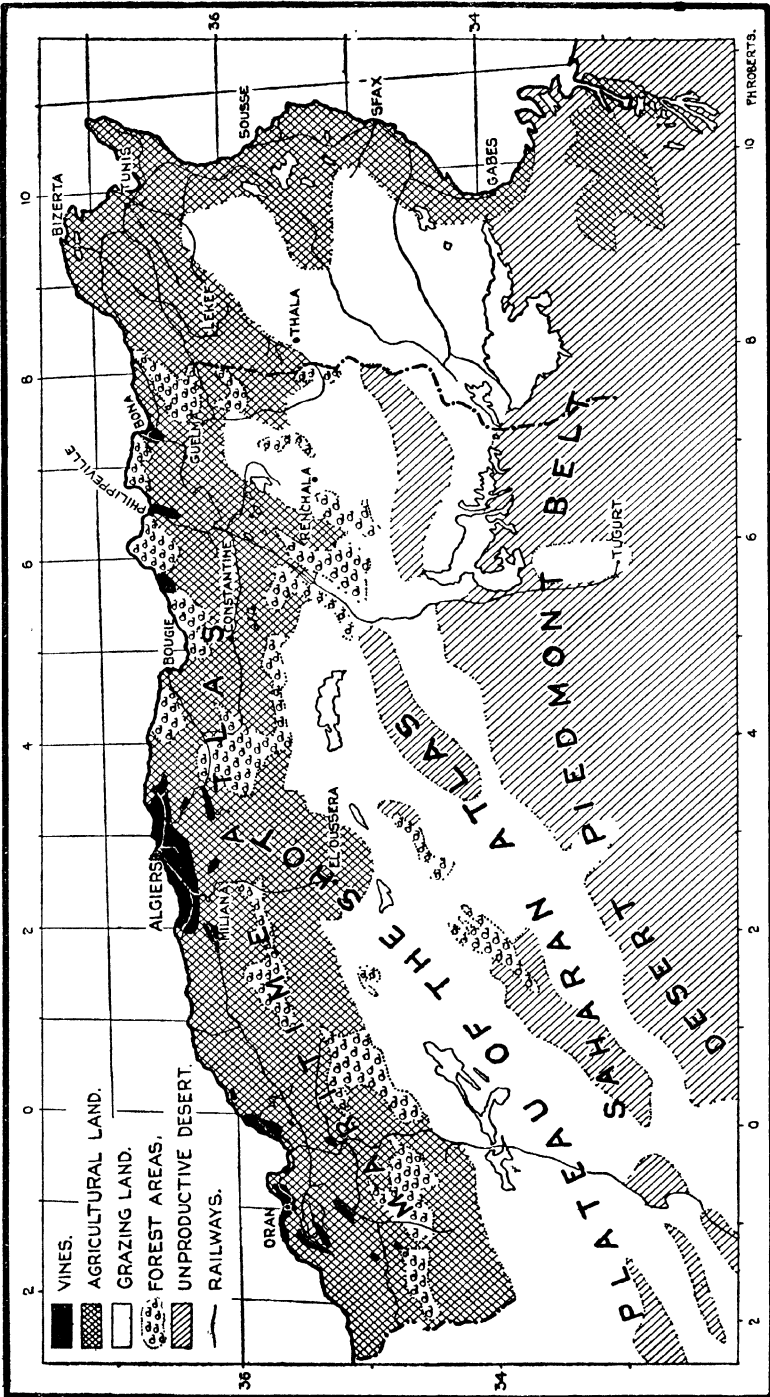
so, because there was a permanent budget deficit. Only from 1904 could the position be termed satisfactory, and, even then, it was a satisfied mediocrity. The total trade certainly increased from about half a milliard francs to a milliard and a quarter in the fourteen years after 1900, but the average figure was nearer a milliard, and it remained to be seen whether the advance since 1904 was permanent or merely transitory.

The war had the effect of giving a premium to agricultural production, and, in short, provided the paraphernalia of a boom period. Nevertheless, in the seven years after 1914, only four saw a preponderance of exports: even the artificial stimulus, in a word the ultra-protection of war conditions, did not avail to place Algerian production on a sound footing, while the preoccupation of France elsewhere allowed foreigners to capture and increase the import-trade,—perhaps the most characteristic phenomenon of Algerian commerce during the war-period. Trade, therefore, developed as follows:—

	Imports.	Exports.	
	(Millions of Francs.)		
1914 . . .	566·8	427·6	
1915 . . .	544·3	619·1	
1916 . . .	—	632·0	
1917 . . .	—	708·0	
1918 . . .	—	—	
1919 . . .	1,357	1,770	—franc @ average of 35 to £1.
1920 . . .	2,535	1,441	„ „ „ „ 50
1921 . . .	1,932	1,397	„ „ „ „ 62·5
1922 . . .	2,007	1,379	„ „ „ „ 62·5
1923 . . .	2,568	1,868	„ „ „ „ 75
1924 . . .	3,188	2,206	„ „ „ „ 88
1925 . . .	3,275	2,404	

Imports thus continued to gain on exports, and, discounting the depreciation of the franc, there was still a disappointingly small development of the total trade. The steady growth of 1904–1914, instead of being provided with an impetus, was shattered by the unusual conditions, and was not recovered after the peace because of the combination of financial distress, currency problems, and a protracted sequence of bad seasons.

So it comes about that Algerian commerce is as precarious as ever, and that, apart from the ten years of quiet development before 1914, there has been practically no satisfactory period. Either imports were unduly enlarged for purposes of public works, as during the period of “official colonization,” or there was a veritable stagnation, as in the twenty years after the decline of official settlement: there was no period of steady or healthy consolidation before 1904 or after 1914, and therein is the tragedy of Algerian development, especially because the fore-



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ordained limits imposed on her development make a gradual building-up the very essence of progress. Algeria, to the contrary, has known no stability, and the commerce-statistics are the best barometer for gauging the unhealthy and spasmodic nature of last century's development. Instead of a normal growth, Algeria has been subject to a disease; now flushed by a deceptive rally (of itself weakening and a testimony of abnormal conditions), now relapsing again into decline, but usually stagnant, neither progressing nor declining. So that, after all, its commerce is the history of a medical case rather than a barometer.

#### AGRICULTURE

It is to be expected that agriculture, the basic determinant of trade in such a country of primary industries, would reflect the conditions mirrored in the statistics of commerce, and this is exactly the case. Commerce and rural production have had practically parallel histories: both are simply the same tale told from different angles. Until 1870, indeed until 1885, agriculture in Algeria was confined to a narrow coastal-strip, chiefly round Algiers and Oran. The Maritime Atlas were as yet untouched, nor had development even in the coastal Tell assumed a specialized local form. There had simply been a desultory series of experiments, in everything from temperate cereals to cotton and indigo.

The first definitive stage in Algeria's rural development came with the introduction of the vine-industry in the coastal-belt. Between 1880 and 1895, the industry was implanted, and success was immediate. The 9,800 hectares planted with vines in 1871 had swollen to 130,000 in 1895, and, despite the appearance of the dreaded *phylloxera* in the latter years of the period and the fall in prices consequent on a general over-production, the progress was continued, albeit on a more reasonable scale. By 1906, 184,000 hectares were planted, and these regions had become a second Languedoc, with viniculture the most important industry. Indeed, the Algerian wine-industry had become one-eighth the size of the French, a remarkable development in less than twenty years, and in face of the crisis of the last years of the century. The implantation of the vine-industry is the brightest spot in the history of Algeria, and, at present, 513,000 acres are so planted and produce 212,000,000 gallons of wine a year.<sup>109</sup>

The progress in the other fields of agriculture, however, has not been so marked. The reasons are many, but chiefly arise from the fact that the great bulk of Algerian agriculture has always been in the hands of the natives, who lock up the land and will not modernize their methods,

<sup>109</sup> Vignon (1888), *op. cit.*, p. 60; E. F. Gautier, *L'Algérie et le Métropole* (1920), p. 188. See table of annual output in de Peyerimhoff, Vol. I, p. 114.

thus keeping the aggregate production absurdly small for the given geographical conditions. To 1904, for instance, more than 80 per cent. of the total agricultural produce came from the natives, and one has but to know the procrastinating temperament of the *fellah*, who clings to the wooden plough and even the ploughing-stick, and pays more attention to superstitious incantations than to phosphate-manure, to understand the enormous waste involved in this state of affairs. Any attempt to reform agriculture, therefore, is stillborn unless it takes into account the native producers, and so far, neither the creation of facilities or rewards has had any chance of availing against the traditional inertia of the *fellah* and his opposition to all reforms. Taking his stand upon the attitude of untold generations of his ancestors, he rests an inert obstacle against the path of reform, and the irony of the situation is that, without him, not all the energies of the European can avail. He dominates the situation, and in his hands is the agricultural future of the land : and that explains why there has always been the gap in Algeria between scientific agriculture in theory and in practice, and why the rural position has changed so little in its essentials during the past century. The native will not change his methods in the slightest, and he will not allow others to change them for him.<sup>110</sup>

The European colonist therefore finds himself checkmated in wishing to improve the country, and indeed tends to associate himself more and more with methods akin to those of the native. Algeria has proven time out of number that, given a country of this kind and with a predominant native population on the land, the only effective system of exploitation is that pursued in Tunisia,—*grande colonisation*, or better still, the newer *moyenne colonisation*, where the Europeans are *entrepreneurs* and the natives *métayers* or tenants.

But, lacking this, Algeria paid,—in stagnation. Under the circumstances, the Europeans naturally turned to viniculture, and, although there has been a certain development of cereals, this attitude implied an inadequate emphasis on other crops. By 1924, 3,492,000 acres were in wheat and 3,157,000 in barley, especially in the Upper Tell, but the yield was relatively low. This was due largely to the “extensive” nature of farming in the Algerian soil, but primarily to the methods employed. The natives knew no progress and, too often, the Europeans adopted a policy of sub-letting their land to them (without the supervision implied in the *métayage* system),—a practice which became so noticeable that one of the aims of the land-legislation of 1904 was to prevent its increase. Instead of scientific methods coming to the fore, there tended to be a progressive levelling-down to the native standard. In

<sup>110</sup> van Vollenhoven (1903), *op. cit.*, pp. 166-168.

the years before the war, however, a marked reaction could be discerned on the part of the Government, and a Commission was sent to study the question of dry-farming in Utah, where the conditions are similar to those on the Atlas slopes.<sup>111</sup> The introduction of lucerne and the more resistant Australian grains were moves in the same direction, but there yet remained the gap between these feelers extended by the Government and the practical methods employed by the European settlers, and still more so those of the native proprietors. A Commission of Inquiry in 1868 had reported that "agriculture in Algeria is more progressive than in France," but that position certainly did not pertain forty years later, when the methods were still based on the age-old native routine followed in Morocco and Egypt and parts of India.

A similar difficulty was encountered in the pastoral industry which, from the point of view of importance, ranks second to viniculture. The great bulk of the flocks and herds have always been in native hands, the typical native occupation being a *transhumant* pastoral life, especially with sheep. As the railway has progressed, sheep have replaced camels; but despite this, the history of the Algerian pastoral industry has been chequered to a marked degree. After the boom of 1888-1889 there was a continual decline until 1901, both with sheep and cattle,—a decline almost as bad as during the great drought of 1882, and this despite the spread of pasture to new areas. The natives are at best pitiable raisers of stock, and a survey of their methods enables one to understand how the breeding of sheep and cattle has scarcely developed since 1830. Commissions appointed to investigate this deplorable state of affairs in 1914 and 1918 found no difficulty in assigning causes to the decline,—an absolute neglect of animal culture, an ignorance of the laws of heredity, a marked ineptitude on the part of herders, discouragement by droughts, the lack of a consistent and energetic service of control on the part of the Government, and, above all, "an almost complete indifference to all questions concerning animal production." The Commissions made it clear that "neither the native nor the European pastoral industry has reached the degree of development warranted by natural conditions," and that the evil was not in the droughts, not in the physical obstacles encountered, but lay far deeper in a neglectful and heedless insouciance, as much on the part of the Government as individuals.<sup>112</sup> The position, especially in view of the world demand for wool and the development of refrigeration, is remarkable, because practically all of the Shot Plateaux and the Saharan Atlas is fair pastoral country.

<sup>111</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Jan. 1911, p. 35.

<sup>112</sup> The Report of 1914 is entitled *L'Élevage en Algérie*. A better survey is H. G. Saint-Hilaire, *L'Élevage dans l'Afrique du Nord, Maroc et Tunisie* (1919).

The only important reform in this connection has been the provision of water-facilities. The first works were in 1856, and "a hydraulic policy" was constantly before the Government in the eighties. Practically a million francs a year were spent in the decade after 1873, which was the starting-point of well-sinking in the Sahara. The Wad Rir was the chief centre of the experiment, and, by doubling its population in twenty years, afforded a hopeful outlook for the policy. But once again the defects of Nature seemed to triumph: the desert, where the artesian water-supplies were of the greatest use, was by no means a promised land, and it became evident that a kindred expenditure elsewhere would produce more than commensurate returns. But nearer the coast, in the agricultural zone proper, irrigation proved to be largely out of the question, owing to the practical absence of watercourses and the extreme uncertainty of the rainfall.<sup>113</sup> As in most other agricultural spheres, therefore, pessimism came to triumph.

The Algerian position has thus resolved itself into an impossible industry, a flourishing viniculture, a backward agriculture, and a positively declining pastoral industry; and these tendencies have characterized every period of Algerian history under the French, except for brief spaces when the pastoral outlook was more hopeful. On the whole, however, in this country which must perforce depend on its rural development, the position has always been crucial, and, instead of being such as to engender a hopeful outlook, has been dominated by ever-present elements of uncertainty. The limitations of Nature made a good deal of this uncertainty inevitable, the attitude of the natives stereotyped it, and the ineffective policies of the French settlers and administration have extended its scope, the result being that it is no exaggeration to say that Algeria to-day, agricultural country as it is, is in a state of perpetual crisis.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

The actual production of agricultural commodities is thus highly uncertain from year to year: and additional problems arise when it comes to conveying the products first to the coast and then to the foreign markets. Railways and shipping are continual problems in Algerian economics. While it is possible, and more than possible, to have a breakdown somewhere in the field of production, even given adequate facilities in these directions, it is clear that not even the most fruitful seasons can avail without them. That is, there may not be progress even with railways and shipping facilities, but there certainly cannot be progress without them.

The railway-problem was complicated from the first because of the

<sup>113</sup> Hamelin, in *Dépêche Coloniale*, 1/3/09.

permanent budget-deficits and because of the chariness with which French capitalists viewed Algerian investments. But the budget-deficit and the unwillingness of the French to increase the annual subsidy to Algeria made inevitable a dependence on private enterprise: hence various conventions placed the colony's railways in the hands of five distinct companies. But, to secure their co-operation, the French Government had to guarantee the payment of interest on their capital. This obligation came to involve France in quite unexpected liabilities, because the railways ran at such a loss and the charges so accumulated that, even in the ten normal years after 1892, the companies had to be granted over 230 million francs. As a result of this position and the rivalry between the companies, the arrangement was described as "a real obstacle to the economic development of Algeria." It was costly without being efficient, and a constant complaint in Algeria was that railway facilities were inadequate. By 1900 there were only 2,400 kilometres, in a network along the coastal fringe and with one southern extension to Tuggurt.<sup>114</sup>

Therefore, a law of July, 1904, in extending Algeria's financial autonomy to the railway sphere, made arrangements for an ultimate repurchase by the State.<sup>115</sup> This objective was made more immediately possible by the intervention of the war, which proved a grave financial blow to the three surviving companies and forced one completely out of existence in 1919. A law of December, 1922, took advantage of this *contretemps* to acquire for the State a certain proportion of the Algerian railways: but it was deemed inadvisable to take over the whole, and so two systems were provided for, 2,000 kilometres to be under State-ownership and the extra 1,000 to be under a joint private company.<sup>116</sup> This division was due to a reaction against State-ownership which had become marked by 1921, and more so to the naïve idea that the competition of a State section and a powerful company would benefit both, and aid efficiency.

However this may be, the Algerian railways are at present under an intermediate *régime*, clearly a step towards the realization of complete State-control. But, as always, the need is not so much for increased efficiency as for an extension of railway facilities, for Algeria has still only 4,214 kilometres of line, although, since effective settlement is concentrated between the Maritime Atlas and the coast, the extent of

<sup>114</sup> de Caix in *L'Afrique Française*, Dec. 1901, p. 401; Bernard in *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, 1/10/99.

<sup>115</sup> Report in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., docts. parl., sess. ext., 1903, p. 277. A. Bernard, *Les Chemins de Fer algériens* (1913), p. 160 *et seq.*

<sup>116</sup> *Journal Officiel*, 14/12/22, for law in full. Explanation is in *L'Afrique Française*, March 1923, p. 139.

the railways, limited though it is, is not as grievous as a study of the area of the whole colony would seem to suppose. Railways are still a problem in Algeria, but the main districts are passably served.<sup>117</sup>

Far more important are shipping facilities, the story in this connection being one of the strangest of the many strange features of Algerian history. Incredible as it may seem, France has continually been enforcing what is neither more nor less than an isolated fragment of the old *Pacte Colonial*, the Navigation System of the English, in so far as Algerian sea-borne commerce is concerned. Until 1866 the *régime* of monopoly was unquestioned, and foreign shipping was not allowed. For a period after this, between 1866 and 1889, the monopoly, under the spur of the free-trade ideas of 1860, was abandoned, and it was decreed that "navigation between France and Algeria can be effected by all flags." Whether there was any causal relationship between the two features or not, this freedom coincided with an increased prosperity in Algeria. Imports increased by 17 per cent. and exports by 40 per cent., although it must be remembered that in these years there was a new feeling of optimism towards Algeria, and this was the apex of the system of "official colonization," with the additional imports that this involved. At the same time, it was clear that freedom of commerce facilitated if it did not actually cause the expansion.

On the other hand, and quite distinct from the protectionist reaction of 1882, two new factors emerged to cause a change in policy. The French mercantile-marine, hampered by foreign competition, found itself in a state of "permanent crisis," and, in addition, French influence was being largely undermined in every other Algerian field without this gratuitous handing-over of sea-going trade to the foreigner. Measures of national policy thus combined with the internal situation in Algeria to cause the law of April 2, 1889, restoring the old *Pacte Colonial* in so far as it related to the exclusion of foreign shipping. Five years before, Algeria had submitted to tariff-assimilation with France, and thus was largely deprived of foreign imports: now, navigation-assimilation was introduced, and really meant a ban on foreign shipping, with the consequent dependence on the whim of French shipowners. All shipping with Algeria had to be under the French flag, and with boats having all the officers and most of the men French, half owned by Frenchmen, and built in French lands,—a unique code, in so far as strictness was concerned.<sup>118</sup>

The results of this antiquated locking-up were to be expected.

<sup>117</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, April 1912, p. 139.

<sup>118</sup> Lusinski (1922), *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 134, 153. See *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 22/3/89, for voting.

Foreigners were kept out, it must be admitted, but the Algerians, individually and collectively, suffered. France, obsessed by the notion of colonial subordination to the interests of the mother-country, seemed determined to place every possible obstacle in the way of colonial development: and the Algerians had to submit to these shackles without the slightest compensation, either direct or ultimate. The policy may have been to some degree justified, had the end been to develop a local mercantile-marine within the colony, but this was impossible, because Algeria could not compete with the State-aided lines from the mainland. The law of 1889 simply meant the dependence of Algeria on mainland shipping—without any safety-valve in case of emergencies. It was not alone the high freights that mattered, although certainly these were sufficiently grievous burdens to a struggling colony. In 1916, for instance, a ton of merchandise could go to America for six francs, to Antwerp for twelve, but to Marseilles for not less than thirty-five!

But such a charge could be arranged for, were it regular. It was the perpetual uncertainty involved in the system that so paralysed Algerian efforts. For example, maritime strikes became frequent in this century,—in 1920 there were thirty-three seamen's strikes, including eleven in Marseilles, and there had been catastrophic strikes in 1900 and 1904 and 1909, each involving what Leroy-Beaulieu called "the sequestration of Algeria." When these disputes broke out, Algeria was isolated from the world. No imports came to her, and, still more grievous, her produce rotted on the wharfs. In 1904, for instance, exports fell to a third of their normal amount, because there were no shipping facilities.<sup>119</sup>

To safeguard the country from a complete economic crash under such conditions, some relief was necessary, and a law of July, 1909, allowed a temporary suspension of the 1889 *régime*, if needed.<sup>120</sup> By virtue of this power, the monopoly, owing to war-conditions, was suspended by a decree of April, 1915, and again in October, 1919, for a period of two years. But the principle of 1889 still holds, and foreign trade with Algeria is practically forbidden. The matter is still approached from the standpoint of national economy; and it is argued that dependence on a foreign mercantile-marine is strategically weak, is opposed to the concept of the French Empire as a centralized organism, and exercises a deleterious influence on the exchange-value of the franc. National interests have to be considered first, and, if need be, the colony must suffer. But, while this point of view is little challenged, it is con-

<sup>119</sup> See Report of special commissioner in *Journal Officiel*, docs. parl., 18/3/05, p. 1749.

<sup>120</sup> Lusinski (1922), *op. cit.*, pp. 182-188; *Journal Officiel*, docs. parl., Deps., 1909, p. 1217.

tended that the colony can pay without having its whole future risked by the whims of trade-union leaders and mainland shippers, and that an adequate service of public steamships could be instituted. Whatever the solution, the very economic life of Algeria is subordinated to the theory of 1889, which is one of the gravest and certainly the most easily removed of the many obstacles confronting Algerian progress. Yet, although the continued suspensions have shown how untenable the position is and how much greater a safeguard free commerce is to the colony, the position remains unchanged in theory and law, with all the uncertainty and economic loss that are involved.

#### THE POST-WAR CRISIS

The accumulated effect of these weaknesses in Algeria's position bore full fruit during and after the war-years, when it became evident that the colony's position was such that it could barely keep afloat during normal years, and that its economic development was not sufficiently consolidated or elastic to allow it to encounter a crisis. The war, in effect, played a strong spotlight on the weaknesses of Algeria's evolution in the preceding decades, and, while this did not help to solve the problems, it at least made them clear and justified those reformers who had been protesting against the false state of security into which misleading or half-true census and budget and commerce reports had lulled the ordinary observers. Critics had held that Algeria's position was fundamentally weak, and that the apparent progress was not on sound foundations: and the strain after 1914 demonstrated the truth of their contentions.

The war at first provided opportunity for Algeria. As a totally agricultural country, a certain market was ensured for her products, and naturally at enhanced prices. Over 17 million metric quintals of cereal-produce were sent to France during the war, and there was all the agricultural development that this implied.<sup>121</sup> At the same time, the war entailed an insuperable financial burden for the Government. Up to 1914 the budgets since the grant of financial autonomy in 1900 had invariably shown a credit-balance, so long as the charges still met by France were not taken into account. Considering only the items to which it was limited, it had allowed an accumulation of 13,000,000 francs of reserves by 1913, and the State debt was insignificant. By 1921, however, this reserve had been absorbed and in its place was an accumulated deficit of 372 million francs,—and this before the post-war collapse.<sup>122</sup> The actual breakdown came in 1921, when to the general

<sup>121</sup> Table in *Journal Officiel*, 26/7/19.

<sup>122</sup> The debt was 860 million francs in 1919, interest charges absorbing 13 per cent. of the annual revenue. See *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1922, p. 170.

post-war restriction was added a four-years' drought. Up to 1920 there had been good harvests, but the financial drift had occurred in spite of them: now, with the entire land in the grip of a drought year after year, the country rushed headlong to ruin. The natives were starving, and 20 million francs a year had to be advanced to them in 1921-1923, and the concerted disasters had sapped their *morale*, the culminating point of disorder coming when typhus and a criminal wave swept over the country together. For four years there were no crops; the heavy cry of distress—the *bââ-bââ*—arose everywhere; and whole regions, even the prosperous Sersou, threatened to revert to the original desert. The world economic crisis of 1920 had naturally led to a restriction of credit-facilities, and the Government of Algeria could not cope with the crisis of depopulation in the rural districts.<sup>123</sup>

The State thus saw its finances crippled, seemingly beyond repair, especially because the franc was continually falling. The budget mounted and mounted, beneath the double impetus of increased charges and a depreciating currency, and, by 1921, trebling that of 1914, it passed a milliard francs for the first time. To restore *morale*, the Government claimed that, since the franc had depreciated to a third of its value in the intervening ten years, the position was really unchanged, but the *Délégations Financières* pointed out that the subsidy from France instead of trebling in proportion had actually been cut down by two-thirds, while the effective yield of taxes had in all increased between four and five-fold. The position had undoubtedly changed for the worse, and the Government had to support all manner of unlooked-for charges.<sup>124</sup> Much was expected from the provincial control of the railway-systems, but the only tangible result by 1922 was an increased deficit of 275 million francs. Moreover, 253 million francs had been spent up to 1923 in helping the drought-victims, because the natives had no reserves to meet crises.

Algeria could no longer carry on, and, in 1921, despite the increased taxes, the receipts were insufficient for the *ordinary* budget expenses, not taking into account those entailed by the drought and the railways and all of the other extraordinary sums that were termed "special accounts."<sup>125</sup> A law of July, 1921, therefore authorized a loan of 1,600 million francs, not, be it noted, for public works or schemes of development, but (the first quota of 250 millions at least) simply to balance the budget and to meet the everyday expenses of administration.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>123</sup> *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1923, p. 211 et seq.; *L'Afrique Française*, April 1923, p. 193. See article by Bluysen in *Colonies et Marine*, Feb. 1921, p. 82.

<sup>124</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, July 1923, p. 384.

<sup>125</sup> Steeg in opening *Délégations Financières*, 1923. See *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1923, p. 212.

<sup>126</sup> *Journal Officiel*, 27/7/21.

The country was slipping back, and meeting its obligations only by putting them on the shoulders of posterity. Algeria, in a word, was in a state of oblivion, and naturally her prestige and credit were gravely weakened when she had to resort to a loan for her ordinary budget-expenses, as nothing could better demonstrate the essential instability of the country's economic position, the more so because equally harassed French colonies elsewhere were emerging from the crisis in a far better manner.

The country had little credit, its resources seemed at an end, its trade was declining, and (if the effect of depreciation be taken into account) even its exports were dwindling. No other French colony fared as badly in the post-war crisis, for all of them had a stable development to fall back upon, and even the Cinderella of French colonies, Equatorial Africa, had its undeveloped resources, while, on the contrary, Algeria seemed only to have the effects of past crises and the retribution of past policies.

This crisis held until 1926. The trade-returns up to the end of 1925 showed a diminution which, while it cannot exactly be computed, amounted to a regular decline of exports, even below the low return of 1920, with practically uniform imports. The dwindling exports are the most telling commentary on the position of a country which depends entirely on agricultural exports, and it is clear that, notwithstanding the extraordinary loans and the depreciation of the currency, the economic barque of French colonization in Algeria is close to the rocks, hampered both by storm and its own inherent lack of power, and drifting helpless, in good or bad seas, without immediate hope of getting to land.

This does not mean to say that the position is irremediable. Algeria has too great natural resources for that: it simply means that French policy over a long period, and the combination of external and internal factors since 1914, have produced a present bankruptcy which can only be averted by frankly recognizing the failures of the past and, as in France itself, by strict reconstructionist measures. Willy-nilly, Algeria is in a position where she has to face her problems squarely. The alignment of forces would probably not have come about so quickly had not the war and both the mondial and local crises after the war precipitated matters; but the general trend of Algeria, even in the years before 1914, was such as to make a far-reaching reconstruction inevitable some time or other. Algeria was in the position of a gambler moderately endowed with fortune, hazarding his riches by unwise play and evading a reckoning or even a summing-up of the losses until a catastrophe brought this reckoning and the drastically changed conduct which it implied. There the matter rests at present; and it cannot be too clearly emphasized that Algeria's

crisis is not simply a corollary of the mainland trouble, but is a blend of this with the indisputable weaknesses of her own development over a long period of time.

### VII. Conclusion

How far, then, may it be said that France has succeeded in Algeria? Clearly, the history of the land in practically every sphere has been a chequered one, and it is out of the question to speak of general success or failure. That would be impossible, even could the Algerian problem be considered as a colonial matter alone; and, in reality, such an isolated setting cannot hold, because the Algerian problem was always complicated and rendered *sui generis* by two features which distinguished it from every other French colony,—namely, the “prolongation of France” idea and its severance, even to-day, from the rest of the colonies; and secondly, the fact that it was never merely a colony to be developed on the most efficient lines possible so much as a training-ground or an experimental station for French colonization elsewhere.

Algeria occupied a peculiar place in the French colonial system: perhaps the most readily grasped analogy is that of a central training-school in an educational system, in connection with which it would be absurd to judge the success of the school in question simply by the scholarship of the pupils. Its success in training teachers would equally have to be considered, and then a wider and more indefinable influence which it would exert on the teaching *corpus* as a whole. And so it is with Algeria, with its peculiar place within the French Empire. The problem is at least triple, and results, to be at all true, should be evaluated from those three standpoints,—as successful in itself, as a training-ground for the colonies, and as affecting the later colonies by a propagation of what, for lack of a better term, might be called “colonial *morale*.” Even so, there is a fourth direction to be considered,—the extent to which Algeria has influenced French policy itself: the training-school, as it were, looks not only outwards to the teaching-world in general, but backwards to the board of education which determines policy. And it would be little exaggeration to say that it has been the wider and vaguer influences which Algeria has exerted on France and the other colonies that have made her so important, and least of all the actual success or failure of Algeria as a detailed and specific experiment in colonization. It is in the wider field of determining and shaping policies and attitudes that Algeria’s real importance has been, especially in the formative periods of French colonial policy, as in the eighties of last century.

But, even considering the unfairness of pillorying Algeria as simply a concrete experiment in colonization, some attempt must be made to

evaluate the general success or otherwise of the French in grappling with the immediate problems they encountered there. In the first place,—and this is the feature that always has dominated, and presumably always will dominate, any Algerian question—there are the natives. Here, the French record has clearly not been satisfactory, and this is the more reprehensible because native policy was for long determined, not by the dictates of local conditions, but almost solely by the policy pertaining in France for the time being. *Refoulement*, assimilation, *cantonnement*, limited *association*, and now the turn to assimilation again since the naturalization law of 1919,—all alike have had the same effect in alienating the natives and aligning them, aloof and at least passively hostile, in a solid phalanx against the French, with whom they have had, and have, no appreciable degree of *rapprochement*. They are an alien element with no part and no hope in the social system, and to them, such an evolution as that contemplated by the naturalization law of 1919 is but the last refinement of mockery, a mockery gloating on their ruin.

There are five million natives in the land and they are rapidly increasing in numbers, despite suffering and droughts and diseases. Though prosperous in Kabylie, the mass of the remainder disposed of their land in the coastal region ; and, taking the whole of Algeria, each native has an average of five hectares, but it must be remembered that much of this is beyond the Maritime Atlas. Their agricultural methods have been little changed since 1830, and, indeed, the *fellah* of the desert lives now very much as his predecessor did under the Bey of Algeria a hundred years ago : life to him is a little more peaceful but quite disgruntled and equally as precarious : starvation is always a possibility, and, in drought years, a probability ; and the main difference is that now he can no longer express his resentment at affairs in general by finding an outlet for his surcharged emotions in war. The natives are backward in everything, and, despite agricultural and educational opportunities, are a constantly hostile and unassimilable *bloc*. Nor is this a newly caused religious movement, or, as in Tunisia, an expression of post-war unrest : rather is it something deeply rooted and handed on from generation to generation throughout the past century. French native policy has failed, and, in view of the general psychology of the natives, such a reform as the naturalization law of 1919 is simply a gesture of weakness, rather than a token of success so far achieved.

In so far as the European populations are concerned, the French are politically and socially dominant, even if their numerical status is by no means clear. Algeria has 405,000 Frenchmen, of whom at least a third are probably of foreign origin. Half of these are agriculturists on the land, but, since the war, there has been a steady drift away from the rural

areas, and it cannot be said that, apart from the flourishing viniculture industry, a French rural population has been soundly established: they have a part in the cereal-production of the Tell, but pastoral pursuits rest outside their ken.

Side by side with them are the foreigners, who are given in the census as numbering 189,000, but who are probably twice as numerous as that. They are not yet absorbed in the wider unity of Algeria, and the two wings of the country are, to all intents and purposes, foreign colonies,—Oran is Spanish and Constantine Italian. The talk of “a neo-African race,” said to fuse the whole of the ethnic elements into a wider and more resilient type, is as yet only a prediction, for the only neo-African race is the French Midi type, modified by the freer life and the ruder conditions and the different climate of Algeria. The foreigners, in other words, remain as distinct social and economic units, and, as such, are always potentially separate political units. At present, both Spaniards and Italians are increasing very rapidly in numbers, and the operations of the automatic naturalization law of 1889 does nothing to make a man who can speak only Spanish and reared in a Spanish *milieu* a Frenchman at heart, or even in his mode of life. The foreigners in Algeria, therefore, are a potential menace, and, at least, the Spanish are a problem, the Italians a distinct danger.

As for the general development of the colony, Algeria has been in the forefront of the French colonies in securing economic enfranchisement, but this has largely been counteracted by the effects of the proximity of the motherland and the control that this has engendered in every branch of economic activity, especially in shipping and imports. Nevertheless, the economic autonomy achieved has been very real, and Algeria is practically self-governing in so far as this is concerned. Political development, however, has not kept pace with economic freedom, and, beyond the obviously inadequate *Délégations Financières* and *Conseil de Gouvernement*, the various sections of the Algerian population have practically no means of expressing their wishes, and still less, save in the budgetary field, of coming to decisions.

Economically, Algeria has suffered from inadequate policies. As a totally agricultural country, her prosperity depends on increased production and rural advance; yet agriculture, save for the vine, is very backward in its methods and practically stagnant, both as concerns European and native efforts. Algeria has missed the *métayer* or capitalistic system of Tunisia and has not secured commensurate gain from the stress laid on installing a population of small European farmers. Agriculture, therefore, remains in a coastal strip north of the Shot Plateaux, from El Oussera to the sea, and even there suffers from an unduly limited outlook.

The ebullience of 1911-1913, with its emphasis on new methods and dry-farming and scientific agriculture, has gone, and in its place a fixed gloom has appeared, no doubt aided by the long absence of credit-facilities due to the antagonism of the Bank of Algeria, which was not ended until 1926. The pastoral industry, although it should be the supplement of agriculture in a belt right up to the Piedmont desert-lands, is practically in the same state as in 1830, both as concerns size and methods, and so needs no comment. Commerce, as dependent on agricultural output, naturally suffers from this backwardness, although the suffering is in this case increased by an anomalous limitation of shipping facilities and the more or less modified isolation of Algeria which this implies. In all, geography and local conditions and French policy have conspired to limit Algeria's economic development; and the war and the subsequent crisis have changed the position from drift to something like catastrophe.

Taking all these factors into consideration, then, it becomes clear that Algeria has been a costly experiment, and, in many directions at least (in so far as the natives, land-policy, and political organization are concerned) a failure. The *peuplement*, so much spoken of and for which so much was suffered, has turned out to be limited in amount and largely foreign in nature: it has not been commensurate with the cost, and, by subordinating everything in Algeria to an artificial scheme of development, has hindered the country's normal growth.

Looking at the Algeria of since 1914, one sees how tragic a disillusion of the imagination was Prévost-Paradol's vision of a "New France,"—the dream so dear to the Ferrys and the Etiennes of last century. Algeria has not been a successful episode in French colonization, and has survived more in spite of, than because of, French policy,—assimilation in every branch, and *refoulement* of the natives, for instance.

But such a summing-up must not neglect the two final factors,—that the potential agricultural riches of the country (a certain if slow avenue of progress) remain as a guarantee of future stability, if the problems be approached in a proper spirit and if policies be determined by the practical needs of the situation; and, secondly, that Algeria had to be a general testing-ground for French colonial experiments, a kind of colonial laboratory, and so had to suffer from inapplicable or incoherent or discontinuous policies. This largely accounts for the complicated land-policies and the various economic and political arrangements at the different stages of the colony's history, and for the general impression that remains that Algeria's policy was always one of *petits paquets*, lacking cohesion or unity. When not bound by this need for experimentation, and profiting from the trial-and-error policies of Algeria, France was able to fare better in Tunisia, West Africa, Madagascar, and even in

Indo-China ; and, in evaluating the success in those colonies, it must be taken into account that much of the success was due to the suffering of Algeria and made possible only by that suffering. Algeria, a failure in many ways itself, had to be a kind of whipping-boy for the rest of the colonies, and so its record of failures was unduly long.

But, all in all, Algeria cannot be taken as a successful instance of French colonization : its history alone would not be a justification for further efforts of colonization, but how much this was due to an inexperience which held in the past but now no longer pertains, and how much to the peculiar relation of "elder brother" which Algeria has always borne to the other French colonies, is not clear. The only clear feature is the mixed character of the record and the failure of the resultant structure to stand the strains and stresses of a prolonged crisis from its own resources.

## CHAPTER VII

### TUNISIA

#### I. The Acquisition of Tunisia

TUNISIA was from the first a contrast to Algeria in many ways, the contrast being the more striking by reason of the geographical contiguity, and more, the geographical similarity of the two countries. Both countries formed a unity with no natural frontier between them, and, although Tunisia was the richer of the two, their conditions and potentialities were very similar. Yet this did not prevent the introduction of vitally different methods in each,—in general government, in native policy, in commerce, in settlement, in immigration, in law, and in most other spheres.

The one was a colony assimilated to France, the other a protectorate which retained an Oriental organization : the one was a country of small settlers, the other of *entrepreneurs* alone ; the one was essentially rural, the other equally urban ; the one saw everything native shattered and priority given to European codes and methods, while the other retained the old native polity as the basis of future organization ; the one thus had the natives driven back, the other left them predominant ; the one had its trade subordinated to France, the other kept its development free. They were at the two extremes of organization, and thus, under practically similar conditions, we have interesting materials for a comparative study of French colonial methods, and under such conditions that the experiences in each can readily be compared, and conclusions drawn, without the presence of those extraneous or local factors which usually prevent such a comparison.

Of course, the adoption of a policy so different from that of Algeria and so foreign to the general spirit of French colonial ideas at the time was largely the result of circumstances. It would be quite wrong to attribute it to any reforming zeal or colonial liberalism, which were non-existent features in the France of the eighties. Circumstances forbade the application of the customary French policy of annexation and assimilation, and France had to be content with what seemed to her a desultory, half-way measure,—and that was all there was to it. The policy, liberal and successful as it turned out to be, was simply forced

on an unwilling France by the logic of events and by the virtual impossibility of introducing the customary colonial *régime*. France was the victim of circumstances, and would have been prepared to explain away a failure by the limitations due to those circumstances: as it was, even the success of the policy could afford no sufficient ground for saying it was deliberately evolved in theory and accepted by the will of the colonizers concerned. Even de Lanessan and Paul Cambon, the leading exponents of the "Protectorate" idea, could not go as far as this, for, whatever the policy was with them as enterprising individuals, to the mass of Frenchmen it was simply an accident,—viewed as at least annoying and almost certainly impossible of survival: it would bridge the gap until France would be able to annex the land completely and introduce a sensible policy of assimilation! How could there be any other attitude in the eighties, which saw the heyday, the unquestioned acceptance, of a rigid assimilation as the determining *motif* of colonial organization in all branches? Tunisia was clearly an exception and accident, and the circumstances surrounding the introduction of the policy should not be interpreted in light of its later success and the sanctioning of the "protectorate" idea in many other French colonies.

The whole of the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of Tunisia support this interpretation, for the *furor* of opposition and colonial intrigue was not such as would accompany the introduction of a new liberal policy for the colonies. Tunisia caused more trouble in France than any other colony except Tonkin. France was still in the grip of the *revanche* idea, and colonies were anathema to her, as amounting to an almost treacherous dispersion of the State's resources: every franc spent in Africa was a step back from the Rhine and, according to the popular fire-brand, Déroulède, a practical insult to the dead of 1870. With these ideas in the ascendant, it is easy to understand the concerted opposition to any new African colony, but it is very difficult to reconstruct the bitterness of the situation and the passionate stirring of the French soul on the matter, first of Tunisia, then of Tonkin.

The country plunged itself into a veritable ecstasy of opposition, and an acute national neurasthenia seemed to develop, with tautened emotions predominant over hard facts, and with a nervous system so overwrought that the question could scarcely be mentioned in terms of approval, let alone rationally discussed. It was a nation against one man, Jules Ferry, but, with his dour Lorraine stalwartness, he fought best with his back to the wall, and gave Tunisia to an unwilling country, taunted the while by the epithet "*Le Tunisien*," which was almost tantamount to "*Le Traître*" in the conditions of 1881. The whole position was amazing, with nothing similar in the history of English colonization,

for even the question of the Boer Republics under Gladstone at least left the nation reasonable and practical. Had the spirit of a Welsh revival-meeting swept over all of Great Britain at that moment, and had the calmness of good manners been submerged beneath a tide of passion, the position might have remotely approached that of France. But it needs the Latin temperament even to conceive of such an orgasm of overwrought emotions concentrating on one point and dominating everything else in life for the time being. And this has to be stressed, because it was not merely an ephemeral tendency, and not merely determined or coloured French activities in Tunisia for some years, but affected the whole of French colonial policy until at least the expansionist period of the nineties.

There were two clearly opposed sets of arguments at the time, as summed up respectively by Ferry and Clemenceau, although the latter's exposition was clearer.<sup>1</sup> Ferry was somewhat vague on the matter, stressing now the interests of the 200 French colonists in Tunisia, now the border-raids on the Algerian frontier, now general political interests, and now the specific economic issues at stake, but mostly a vague desirability of expansion. His attitude was one of indefinitely etched and rather incoherent reasons, lacking the aggressive clarity of his rival's standpoint. He committed the tactical blunder of merely answering Clemenceau's arguments and thus putting himself in the position of a person accused; and clearly, defiant publicism was the need, rather than legal arguments in the Assembly. Of course, he was hampered, because, as Premier of France, he could not reveal the true economic and international motives that drew him from a general belief in colonial expansion to a specific intervention in Tunisia at that moment. He was bound by the dictates of policy and his position, and so could not effectively answer his opponents.

On the whole, however, his policy was determined by three motives,—economic, international, and Algerian, and it is difficult to place these in their relative order of importance. The motive most clearly expressed was the Algerian. As Ferry himself said, "the Tunisian question is as old as the Algerian," for the very contiguity of the two countries had, in the preceding fifty years, "led to a quite remarkable sequence of ideas and a unity of designs and conceptions on this point."<sup>2</sup> Tunisia was always a hatching-ground for disturbances in Algeria, and an ever-present source of menace, both political and military. There could be

<sup>1</sup> Ferry's explanation is in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 6, 10/11/81, or in his collected speeches, Vol. IV, p. 481, and the whole of Vol. V; Clemenceau's in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 9/11/81.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 6/11/81.

no frontier peace with an asylum so handy for raiders, and with no punishment meted out to them on the Tunisian side of the border. Thus, in the decade before 1881, no fewer than 2,635 claims were addressed to the Bey for depredations committed in Algeria by tribal raiders from his side of the line, and this did not take into account the numerous unrecorded or unproved *razzias* or the gun-running to the disaffected Algerian tribes.

It was out of Tunisia, too, that the wider Moslem unsettling came to disturb Algeria. The Senussi and the other fraternities of the desert operated through Tunisia, and the specific troubles in 1875–1881 coincided with a much wider Pan-Islamic movement, of which the Kroumir rising in Constantine, the move of Arabi in Cairo, the massacre of the Flatters mission in the desert, the insurrections of South Oran, and perchance even the unrest in West Africa, were all part and parcel. So long as such movements could ferment, or even be encouraged in Tunisia, then so long was security in Algeria impossible,—and the serious risings of 1871 and 1875 still loomed largely in people's memories. The safety of Algeria thus demanded control or at least the benevolent neutrality of Tunisia, and the latter seemed to be impossible without the former. Ferry, throughout, emphasized this motive of chastising the tribes and getting guarantees for the future more than any other, and indeed said that the *sole* reason of going to Tunisia was “the absolute need of ensuring the safety of our Algerian colony.”<sup>3</sup> But it is difficult to see how this factor alone would explain his attitude and his fight against practically the whole of France, for it was a curious method of safeguarding North African interests by arousing such a bitter opposition to them. The frontier menaces certainly afforded an adequate pretext for intervention at that moment, but probably they were pretexts rather than the actual cause, and the opposition standpoint of d'Orano seemed to approximate to the truth: “I wonder,” he said to the Deputies on May 23, 1881, “why, while the massacre of the Flatters mission by the Touareg produces no expedition, and while the raid of the Moroccan tribes on South Oran leads to no hostility on our part against Morocco, this incursion of 300 Kroumirs on our eastern frontiers leads us to Tunis. Therein lies the whole question!”<sup>4</sup>

Far more important were the economic motives, which really explained why France, at a moment of acute anti-colonialism, engaged in an expedition which at once cost her 153 million francs. As the opposition saw, it was here that the real issues were at stake. In the first place, there was

<sup>3</sup> Official circular of 9/5/81, in Valet, *L'Afrique du Nord devant le Parlement au XIXme Siècle* (1914), p. 169. Compare Ferry in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 11/4/81.

<sup>4</sup> *Journal Officiel*, 24/5/81. Contrast Ferry in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 6/4/81.

the general consideration that Tunisia was a very rich country, a kind of prolongation of Algeria to the sea, but becoming increasingly rich as one went east. The country had been a granary and the wine-cellar of Rome,—a land of concentrated agricultural richness. As Pliny the Younger has said of the Tacape oasis: "There, under a very high palm-tree, an olive grows; under the olive a fig-tree; under the fig-tree a pomegranate, and under it a vine; under the vine are wheat and vegetables and herbs, all in the same year, and each growing in the shade of the others." Exaggerated though this is, it rightly stresses the greater richness of Tunisia than of Algeria. The soil was more fertile, the population denser and more sedentary, and, what was most important in a Moslem country, the natives were gentle and their lands were not locked up in communal holdings. Everything conspired to make Tunisia the most desirable part of North Africa from an economic point of view, the more so as powerful specific interests had come at this stage to reinforce the general desirability.

After prospering in the middle years of the nineteenth century, Tunisia had fallen under the anti-French Mohammed Sadak (1859–1882), who allowed the country to drift and commenced a *régime* of intrigues for the granting of concessions to foreigners. France had enjoyed certain privileges in Tunisia since 1664 and had obtained wider liberties by "the fundamental pact" of 1857 which had commenced the modernization of the country. To allay the financial drift, a kind of international rule was established in 1869, with England, France, and Italy forming a tripartite Commission of Control. But Britain waived her claims at the Berlin Congress, and France came to increase her share by promoting various private ventures which seemed to have at least a governmental *imprimatur*, and perhaps a stronger connection.

By 1880, therefore, France could adduce four important economic interests in Tunisia: firstly, there was a general monopoly of telegraphs and various other communication-facilities: then, there was an important railway project to unite Bone and Guelma, with its implications on the future of Eastern Algeria and the linking of French interests in North Africa: then there was the much-quoted Enfida Domain, which was practically a large private colony of Frenchmen on the north coast of Tunisia: and lastly, there was a private Credit Foncier project which was to play a considerable part in the economic development of the land. All of these were French, all directly or indirectly affected State interests, and all of them were placed in jeopardy by the recalcitrant attitude of the Bey. They implied a French colony, a French trans-African railway, a French monopoly of communications, and a French control over the country's financial development. In the aggregate of their possibilities,

they were an important phalanx, and there was little doubt as to the aims expected of such measures of penetration.<sup>5</sup> Ferry, referring to these specific ventures, called them "the collaborators of economic conquest," and even the official circular accompanying the French Yellow-Book on Tunisian affairs (1881) said that, "under French protection, all the natural resources of this region can be developed with the energy and intensity of modern methods and practices,"—a clear definition of the policy of economic Imperialism. So that, however much Ferry might reiterate that "it was not for such motives that we made the Tunisian expedition," the interpretation of his opponents in seeing the conquest as almost entirely a measure of economic imperialism seemed the more correct one, although they probably under-estimated the vague and idealistic impulses which actuated Ferry.

The final set of motives were those inspired by a mistrust of Italian ambitions in the Mediterranean. It is significant that the manner in which France prepared the way for Tunisia was such that the sanction of every interested Power, except Italy, the most interested of all, was obtained,—this omission being regarded as a testimony of the irreconcilable nature of the two countries' pretensions. Italians had for long had an eye on Tunisian development, and by 1880 there were 20,000 Italians there as compared with 200 Frenchmen. An Italian Company had received the concession for a railway from Tunis to Goulette and had obtained a large governmental subsidy from Rome: the Italian Consul-General supported the rival claimants to the Enfida Domain: and there was much talk in Italy about Bizerta, the best port in the Mediterranean, on the securing of which, as a complement of Toulon, the French placed so much emphasis.<sup>6</sup> France, therefore, keenly desired to forestall Italy, and her statesmen were torn between this motive and their traditional hostility to colonial ventures.

As a result of all of these influences,—political and economic and international, with a vague imperialism giving unity to the whole,—Ferry resolved to act. Taking advantage of an application from the French colony in Tunisia for protection, he demanded a credit of 5,695,000 francs from Parliament (April, 1881), and received it by an almost unanimous vote.<sup>7</sup> This was the starting-point of the trouble, for, as it afterwards turned out, the great bulk of the Deputies had no notion that they were sanctioning a new colonial venture: they thought that they

<sup>5</sup> For details, see Livre Jaune, *Affaires de Tunisie, 1870-1881* (1881), or Ferry's speech in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 10/11/81.

<sup>6</sup> P. Chickhachev, *Espagne, Algérie, et Tunisie* (1880), p. 555; A. Rambaud, *Jules Ferry* (1903), pp. 288, 289.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 8/4/81. The application for help is in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 9/11/81.



were voting for coercive measures over an independent Power and had no idea at all of attacking that Power's authority. Indeed, Ferry himself declared time and again that he had not the slightest intention of conquering Tunisia and that the expedition was solely for police or punitive purposes.<sup>8</sup> Whether he really believed this at so late a juncture or whether he was overcoming the predominant anti-colonialism of Parliament by a subterfuge is not clear, but probably he was drifting with events. In May, 1881, he solemnly declared that "we wish neither the Bey's territory nor his throne" and that all ideas of conquest or annexation were repudiated. But, after the general election of that year and after the Treaty had been ratified, his attitude, or at least his public attitude, changed, probably because of the favourable election-results and the ease with which the conquest had been achieved in Tunisia, and he adopted the view-point that the credits he had received had been "a provision and not a limitation." and that, having received the first, the implication was that he could go on.

In consequence of this change of front, there came the scene of November 9, 1881,—“one of the most singular meetings that ever took place in the French Parliament.” The rising in Southern Tunisia and the need of a second expedition had made it clear that France, whether she wanted it or not, was in the position of a conqueror, and even the moderate periodicals, like the *Journal des Débats*, became restive. The whole of the opposition parties had been thrown together by their agreement on this issue: the Right and the extreme Left, as usual, combined to attack the moderate Republicans, and were joined by the many moderates who were opposed to distant ventures and upheld the fashionable anti-colonial “policy of *recueillement*.” The Ferry Government was attacked on all sides, especially by Clemenceau and Rochefort.<sup>9</sup> The former led the opposition in Parliament, the latter in the Press. Rochefort, in a famous article in *L'Intransigeant*, called the Tunisian expedition a “coup de Bourse” and, in what was the *cause célèbre* of 1881, was tried for libel, but acquitted (December 15).

On the eleventh of the preceding month, however, the real issue had been fought and the Ferry administration hurled from power. Clemenceau had argued that annexation had been aimed at from the first, that Parliament had been deliberately hoodwinked by Ferry, and that the expedition was only a pandering to commercial interests, especially those involved in the railway-company and the Enfida Domain. Ferry

<sup>8</sup> E.g. in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 12/4/81, 13/5/81.

<sup>9</sup> Leroy-Beaulieu, “La Tunisie et l'Opposition,” in *Revue Politique et Littéraire*, 13/8/81. See Ferry's defence in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 6/11/81. Leroy-Beaulieu's series of articles from 28/8/80 to 21/5/81 is a useful running commentary.

retorted that a trans-Tunisian railway was not in any sense a *coup de Bourse*, but a vital matter for French North Africa. But his arguments lacked clarity. He still refrained from striking for conquest and found himself in the illogical position of refuting both the theory of annexation and the theory of abstention, thus cutting the ground from beneath his feet. When the matter of the second treaty came up, therefore, there were four hours of impassioned debate and then two hours of anarchy,—an amazing period when no less than sixty “orders of the day” were rejected and when the Chamber resembled a scrambling bear-pit. Though victorious in the recent elections, Ferry, isolated as he was, had to give way, and it was only Gambetta’s firmness that restored order. Next day, Ferry resigned, but Gambetta carried on the policy of maintaining Tunisia. If Ferry conquered Tunisia despite France, it was Gambetta who retained it, for, on that November day, Ferry found himself paralysed and unable to move, and, had Gambetta not stepped into the breach, Tunisia would undoubtedly have been evacuated.<sup>10</sup>

By this stormy method, France obtained control of Tunisia, and it is important to remember that policy was for long determined more by the memory of November 11 than by anything else, and Tunisia was associated with the equally unpopular Tonkin in popular imagination. Most of the trouble, however, was in France, because the land itself was easily occupied, as the Tunisians, easy-going and slothful, are the least combative of all the North African peoples. The first treaty, that of Bardo (May, 1881), was secured after practically a skirmish, and, in nine short articles, gave France a right of occupation and of managing Tunisia’s military affairs.<sup>11</sup> But it did not mention a Protectorate, and France seized the opportunity of the Sfax insurrection to bring about the Convention of June 8, 1883, which definitely established a protectorate and a right of intervention in domestic matters.<sup>12</sup> Not till October, 1884, however, was machinery set up to make this internal control effective, and, until “civil controllers” were introduced at this latter date, the French really limited themselves to military occupation. But, by the end of 1884, the storms at home had settled; France had resolved to maintain Tunisia; and the decree giving her control of the administration stereotyped this position. By that time France was mistress of Tunisia.

<sup>10</sup> Full details are in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 6-13/11/81.

<sup>11</sup> Supplement to Livre Jaune, *Affaires de Tunisie*, April-May 1881; *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 13, 25/5/81. See Reinach in *Revue Politique et Littéraire*, 21/5/81.

<sup>12</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 2/4/84, or Ferry’s collected speeches, Vol. V, p. 100 *et seq.* The best account of the negotiations is in “P.H.X.” (d’Estournelles de Constant), *La Politique Française en Tunisie* (1891).

## II. The Organization of Tunisia

The question of organization was a pressing one, because France had to determine on what lines she was going to rule her conquest. Clearly she could not introduce her usual colonial system, that of rigid assimilation, because the land was only a protectorate and because native organizations were too strong. But would she recognize those organizations in their entirety, or would she introduce as much of the assimilation régime as was possible under the circumstances? The pressure of facts decided this question for her, as the only thing that she could do was to recognize the *status quo*, with a minimum of change. The basis of Tunisian affairs had to remain as before, and the land retained its Oriental organization, with advice given by European "controllers" or residents. A certain dualism thus came to characterize Tunisian affairs, power being divided between the native base and the French control. The Bey remained and kept his two civil Ministers, although war and foreign affairs naturally went to France, and the French Resident-General presided over the Council of Ministers. In local government, there was a similar cleavage: the native *caids* and *khalifas* were kept for local administration, the *cheikhs* for tax-levying, and the *cadis* for justice, but the thirteen French "civil controllers" acted as Residents and kept the control of provincial affairs well within their hands. Even the courts were mixed in the same manner, with European guidance on a basis of native law and practice. In Algeria native justice was sent by the board; in Tunisia it was kept, and the *Code Napoléon* was powerful only because its procedure unconsciously lingered in the minds of the French law-officers. The Government completely abandoned the idea of unifying Tunisian legislation and justice, and consciously kept this duality throughout its organization.<sup>13</sup>

This compromise worked very well for a time and suited both parties. It was to France's interests, because there was no native resentment such as hindered the progress of Algeria, and, even more important, expenses, being limited to the army and to a railway-loan, were reduced to a minimum; and to secure these results, France was prepared to close her eyes to the inertia and corruption of the Oriental methods of government. On the other hand, the natives, for their part, were pleased with the compromise, because their old mode of life was disturbed as little as possible and they retained their former codes of law and their customary institutions. Everything seemed to be going on as before in the land, save that the incomprehensible foreigners were more in evidence. Cambon's idea of a "protectorate" and a preservation of

<sup>13</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 18/7/82; Valet (1924), *op. cit.*, p. 94.

native institutions seemed to be working well, and, what the country lacked in efficiency and progress, they gave it in stability and peace. The absolute quiescence of Tunisian affairs until 1914 must be attributed to this policy of compromise and abstention,—of progressing through native organizations and on native lines, and with only a minimum of foreign intervention.

As time went on, however, the attitude towards the compromise began to change. The opposition between the Oriental ideas of the civil-government of Tunisia and the Occidental view-point of France became more and more marked, and it was clear that there had to be a kind of joint development. To speak of parallel evolution, with practically no contact between the two trends, was seen to be only a cover for either unequal growth or divergent growth. Native organizations either stood still or else progressed on lines incompatible with French ideas. A more directly controlled evolution was needed, and, even if uniformity of organization between France and Tunisia was not sought, there at least had to be compatibility. In political organizations, for instance, a change on European lines, at least to some degree, was necessary, for, up till 1881, there was no council or deliberative assembly in any form in Tunisia, and the Advisory Conference instituted in 1896 was an assembly of notables rather than a legislative body. Similarly with justice: the mixed courts worked very well in land matters, because there the primal need was to consider the local code, but, in other fields, their operation was cumbrously inefficient, and at times little short of ludicrous.<sup>14</sup> The law of contract and the criminal code, for example, were completely different in French and native law, and it seemed to Frenchmen to be an anomaly to sanction polygamy and severely punish drunkenness.

Reforms of 1922, therefore, brought about significant changes in each of these branches, and thus confirmed the newer opinion that the duality of Tunisian organization was only a sign of transition,—a hampering restriction imposed on the French by the pressure of circumstances. The changes, by using councils and the principle of the separation of powers, brought both administration and justice into line with Western ideas. Native courts were left for purely native matters, but for others there were to be French courts, and even the Mixed Court which decided land-matters had become more French than native in practice. Tunisia had gone far towards the Algerian position, and Cambon's "benevolent control" had given way to the newer idea of rapid reform. Ferry had said that "the representative régime, the

<sup>14</sup> V. Bismut, *Essai sur la dualité législative et judiciaire en Tunisie* (1922), pp. 12, 236 et seq. Compare Alapetite in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 27, 30/1/12.

separation of powers, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and written constitutions are senseless formulæ there,"<sup>15</sup> yet practically all of these had been introduced. The dualism which had been the very essence of Cambon's organization was rapidly giving way, and the suppleness and elasticity which had characterized Tunisia before 1914 were being replaced by the extraneous methods followed in Algeria.

But this change belonged entirely to the post-war period, and, before then, Tunisia represented the "protectorate" idea, with the primary emphasis on a toleration of native customs and as little interference as possible with the ordinary life of the native. All of the Residents had consistently followed Cambon's policy, and indeed, it was largely because Tunisia only had six Residents up to 1916 that such an unusual degree of continuity was made possible. The position in all of these years was native self-government and French direction, with a real tolerance and adaptability predominating in the French attitude. Perhaps this was in no small measure due to the fact that Tunisia was outside the scope of the Paris colonial *bureaux* and was always under the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who was generally too much occupied elsewhere to trouble over the *minutiae* of Tunisian administration and who was content to leave the Resident-General a free hand as long as there was no trouble,—a position very different from the constant intervention of the *bureaux* in Algerian affairs and the Minister of Colonies elsewhere. The accident of its status thus helped Tunisian development and explained both the continuity of policy and the freedom from petty interference.

So it came about that a quiet, almost untroubled, prosperity characterized Tunisian affairs, aided, too, by the internal nature of the country. The Tunisians were not high-spirited natives but docile town-dwellers, and, being relatively prosperous and with a prosperity based on trade, were peaceably inclined. "Native policy" was therefore practically non-existent before the war, and perhaps this absence of a positive policy was the best testimony to the quietness of the situation. France simply had to refrain from interference and provide a peaceful environment,—that was all; and, if she let native affairs go on as before, there was no problem. Hence there came to be toleration rather than a concrete native-policy. The Tunisian was never sacrificed to a theory as was the Algerian, but continued in his former mode of life, save that the more stable conditions of existence enabled him to prosper to a greater degree. As France was not obsessed by any theory of a French peasant-proprietary, there was no dispossession as there had been in Algeria, but, on the other hand, a quiet native proletariat. It would be difficult to imagine a more complete contrast than between the native

<sup>15</sup> Ferry's *Collected Speeches*, Vol. V, p. 529.

policy of Algeria since 1850 and that of Tunisia since 1881,—the one theoretical and based on native exploitation, and the other practical and conducive to native progress.<sup>16</sup>

Everything seemed ready-made for the French administrators. There was no difficulty in defining the tribes or the status of the natives: they were simply beylical subjects, and even the question of military service was thus solved. None of these questions—legal status, tribal rights, conscription, land-matters—occasioned the turmoil that they had in Algeria. In all of them, a mere continuation of the previous system sufficed. There was no breaking-up of the tribes or of tribal organizations, and consequently none of the artificial policies that Algeria had known. Everything simply continued, and so the French “controllers” did not rule directly in any part of Tunisia: in fact as in theory, they did not administer but merely overlooked the machine and advised the *caïds* and native chiefs. Even the old taxation system was retained, although Cambon was rigorously attacked for sanctioning this instead of introducing what seemed to France to be more modern and efficient and equitable methods. But he held here as elsewhere (and this was the key-note of the “protectorate” policy), that it was not a vice to be Oriental in an Oriental country, and, relying on his experience in the Far East, he strenuously fought against the introduction of European or assimilative ideas. And in this he was right, even though the Tunisians had to pay almost twice as much in taxes as the Algerians: the taxes were traditional and sanctioned by the approval of generations, and those were the features that appealed most to the natives.

By means of this moderate policy of abstention the French encountered no native trouble in Tunisia until 1912. After Cambon (1882–1886) and Massicault (1886–1892) had organized the policy, the various Residents carried it on on the basis of retaining as many native laws and customs as possible, and especially by winning over the religious fraternities and the traditionalists. But the position, as with government and law, was changing, and by the new century there were several native opinions where previously there had been only one. Cambon’s school, for instance, by adhering to those who looked backward to reform on native lines, made little appeal to the younger sections of the natives, the *Jeunes Tunisiens*, who demanded radical changes on European models and who created a considerable stir in 1912—the first real sign of a native problem in Tunisia.<sup>17</sup> From this time onwards, a grave

<sup>16</sup> See estimate in J. L. de Lanessan, *La Tunisie* (2nd edition, 1917), p. 304, or V. Piquet, *La Colonisation française dans l’Afrique du Nord* (1912), pp. 127, 424.

<sup>17</sup> See important debates in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 25/11/11, 2/12/11, and 20/1/12–3/2/12.

native ebullience completely changed the position; but, up till then, it was always against the favourable background of a prosperous and acquiescent native proletariat that Tunisian development took place, and this was the most important entry on the credit-side of the French ledger.

### III. Economic Development

#### AGRICULTURE

A rich country, a predominantly native and contented population,—these were the raw materials with which France had to work in Tunisia, and it is little wonder that the achievement was great. On the other hand, too much of the credit must not be given to the purely negative conceptions of the French, for they had certain clearly defined *positive* policies which did much to account for the ultimate result. It seemed as if they set out definitely to reverse their experiences in Algeria, for they took a stand against official colonization, against settlement in villages, against the immigration of a French peasantry, and against the expropriation of lands for purposes of settlement,—in short, they stood for capitalistic colonization alone and for the retention of the natives in their existing capacities. The emphasis in Algeria had been on the introduction of “human capital” in the form of hardy men of the Midi and their families, but, in Tunisia, the capital encouraged was the franc, with the *entrepreneur*-system that this implied. French capitalists were wanted, not French farmers, and this preconceived idea of the feudal nature of Tunisian colonization was at the root of French policy in many directions, especially in the economic field. The only scope was for the man of capital, and the various policies were designed with this end in view.<sup>18</sup>

The country itself is one of dry plains, two-thirds of which are useless, but with the remaining portion ideal for wheat and olives, and it is along these two lines that Tunisian development has proceeded. At first, all of the emphasis was on the development of vines by means of capitalistic investment, especially in the hands of companies. Enfida, the domain which had caused the trouble before 1881, and which was really private colonization by Marseillais on a large scale, was the model. This huge estate of 96,000 hectares was the largest in all Northern Africa, and its history is really an epitome of the rural development of Tunisia. In the early years the Company suffered from the shortage of labour, for, after the revolt, there was scarcely one native to 70 hectares of land,

<sup>18</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 2/3/88 (Ferry); Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes* (1905 edition), Vol. II, p. 4, or in *Journal des Débats*, 20/2/1901.

and they were hard pressed to carry on. But, adopting a policy of conciliation, they worked out the *métayer*-system which afterwards spread through the whole of Tunisia. The first-comers amongst the French had distrusted the natives, but the *Enfida* exploiters used them as tenants and suppressed the rights of serfdom which they could have claimed under the old Beylical law. They thus attracted the natives from the surrounding districts, and showed how they could be utilized as independent tenants, even in the restless Sahel region.<sup>19</sup>

Lesser Companies were formed on the model of *Enfida*, like the "Society of French Farms in Tunisia" (1898) or the Sidi-Tahelt settlement on the Bizerta road, and it seemed as if Tunisian settlement was to be definitely on capitalistic methods.<sup>20</sup> By 1897, 467,000 hectares were alienated to Frenchmen in this manner, but in all there were only 275 proprietors; whereas in Algeria, from 1871 to 1886, 435,000 hectares were ceded, but to 39,000 persons! In reality the position was even worse than these statistics showed, because the great bulk of the Tunisian area was held by a mere handful of capitalists. In 1908, for instance, more than half of the 811,000 hectares allotted was in the hands of sixty-eight French or foreign owners, and, according to the official figures of 1914, a hundred persons held at least two-thirds of the 787,000 hectares which were then alienated to French settlers. Capitalistic settlement had thus meant aggregation of huge estates by a few people, and had not involved a commensurate development of the country's resources.<sup>21</sup>

This was clearly evident by the mid-nineties, when a whole series of factors combined to prove the weakness of the system. In a country in which the shortage of land was the gravest obstacle to progress, and where even then the administration was being forced to tackle the difficult question of religious lands, practically the whole of the land had been alienated to a few score of absentees who neither progressed themselves nor provided facilities for others. Then, too, the system, even when successful, had involved certain anti-social tendencies. The early hopes of a vine-industry rivalling that of Algeria had been dashed to the ground, and the exploiters had perforce to turn to cereal-cultivation. But this meant the need of more labour, and the utilization, not of natives on a modified serf-basis, but of European tenants. And, because French farmers would not migrate to this land where favours were accorded only to capitalists and where there were neither official-villages nor free-grants nor all the other facilities of the Algerian *régime*, the European

<sup>19</sup> G. Loth, *L'Enfida et Sidi Tahelt* (1910), pp. 105-130.

<sup>20</sup> Its annual reports are collected in *25 Ans de Colonisation nord-africaine* (1926).

<sup>21</sup> For this aggregation, see Tumedei, *La Questione tunisina e l'Italia* (1922), p. 188; *L'Afrique Française*, April 1921, p. 111.

*entrepreneurs* in Tunisia had to turn to Italians. So that capitalistic development meant a locking-up of most of the land and a utilization of a little by Sicilian tenants.

Tunisia, therefore, gradually entered the second stage of her economic evolution,—one of a more varied agriculture on smaller lines, that is, *moyenne* as against *grande* colonization.<sup>22</sup> With the turn to cereals came a corresponding turn to smaller estates and direct European farmers. No longer was there to be only a vague work of direction by European capitalists; on the contrary, average well-to-do farmers were themselves to work the land. As if to symbolize the change, colonization left the east for the north, and the centre of rural development shifted from the Cape Ben and Enfida regions to the Medjerdah. The result was a steady increase in the rural population, despite the needless alienation of the past. This was to some extent reflected in the official statistics. In 1887, 275 French proprietors held 284,000 hectares; in 1912, 2,719 held 774,000 hectares; and, while this did not mean a corresponding increase in actual settlement, the number of proprietors had at least increased eightfold, whereas the area had only trebled. *Moyenne* or average colonization was emerging, and grazing-farmers were replacing absentee capitalist-owners as the normal type of rural settlers in Tunisia.

This position was distinctly a healthier one than the preceding stage, and seems most in consonance with the conditions in the land. *Grande* or capitalistic colonization had clearly broken down, and the spasmodic attempts to introduce official settlers on the Algerian model had not succeeded.<sup>23</sup> As Leroy-Beaulieu argued throughout, Tunisia, whether in the hands of absentee-capitalists or resident-farmers, was a country of exploitation rather than immigration, and it was generally believed that this was so. When the reporter on the Tunisian budget in 1899 stated that “the aim of the Protectorate is to implant a population of Frenchmen in Tunisia,” the Deputies were scandalized, because such a concept would have meant a reversal of practically the whole French policy in the country. It is true that, after 1897, as a result of a reaction against the immigration of Italians in large numbers, there was a move to attract small French settlers, and that, by ten years later, a Government fund of 7½ million francs was available for this purpose; but the Government was never enthusiastic over the scheme and, to 1914 at least, was concerned almost entirely with the economic develop-

<sup>22</sup> de Lanessan, *La Tunisie* (1917 edition), p. 169 *et seq.*

<sup>23</sup> Pichon Report on Tunisia, especially on French colonization, in *Journal Officiel*, docts. parl., 1912, No. 85. Summary in *L'Afrique Française*, 1912, p. 226.

ment, the *mise en valeur*, of the country, and not with *peuplement* by French farmers.<sup>24</sup>

The experiments of the nineties certainly seemed to warrant this attitude, because by 1909, in the three centres created, only four of the original farmers remained, and the villages had reverted to the original bush. So too with the experiments after 1914, when a definite programme of introducing small farmers was tried. Some 242 French families were installed in Northern Tunisia within six years, but the results were mediocre, as the aim was not so much settlement as strategy. These villages were "species of civil and agricultural French garrisons," dumped down in the Tell to counteract the spread of Italian peasants there and to act as nuclei for the dissemination of a distinctly French influence. In a word, it was "essentially the creation of strategic posts," and not an agricultural experiment. Both of these attempts, therefore, by their failure, gave further support to the policy of aiding moderately wealthy farmers, and it is in this direction, especially in opening up the *habous* or religious lands hitherto closed, that the Government has been working of recent years. The settlement of moderate working-capitalists is the direction in which Tunisian agricultural experience has crystallized, and this form seems most suited to the position and needs of the country,—certainly more so than the peasant-settlement of Algeria or the earlier Tunisian experiments of absentee plantation-owners.<sup>25</sup>

At present, the position is as follows:—

	EUROPEAN HOLDINGS			
	French.	Italians.	Maltese.	Others.
	(Hectares.)			
Tell . . . . .	305,000	43,600	9,500	9,600
Sahel and steppe . .	249,000	17,100	5,400	1,800
	<u>554,000</u>	<u>60,700</u>	<u>14,900</u>	<u>11,400</u>
	EUROPEAN OWNERS			
	French.	Italians.	Maltese.	Others.
	(Hectares.)			
Tell . . . . .	1,436	1,236	39	33
Sahel and steppe . .	272	329	63	17
	<u>1,708</u>	<u>1,565</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>50</u>

Two features are thus evident after forty years of Tunisian settlement. The first is how feeble has been the result in so far as settlement by Frenchmen is concerned, for, even taking every proprietor as a resident (a condition by no means pertaining in Tunisia), there are only 1,708

<sup>24</sup> Compare interpellation in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 9/2/1901.

<sup>25</sup> Rood Balek in *L'Afrique Française*, April, 1921, p. 112 *et seq.*, p. 321.

French settlers, as compared with Algeria's 200,000: and the second point is the corollary of this, that effective settlement has largely fallen into foreign hands. There are more Italian and Maltese settlers on the land, and, if absentees be deducted, the difference is further in favour of the Italians. But this failure is less significant than if the policy sought had actually been one of encouraging personal settlement: as it is, the evil is not so much in the lack of French settlers (that was only to be expected as a result of the policies enforced) as in the settlement of Italians in the face of obstacles put in their way.

Even more important is the result that the early policy of large alienations is exerting on present problems, because the land so tied up represents most of the Tell,—that narrow strip of never more than a hundred miles in extent which contains the best land of Tunisia. Hence the only source of land available for future settlement is in the extreme south, the Sahel and the steppe country, isolated and of an inferior quality. The domain lands in the Tell are exhausted, and it is a common sight in this pre-eminently restricted land to see areas which have not been occupied for over twenty years, held by speculators for a gain. Indeed, the State domain has always been limited in extent, amounting only to 100,000 hectares at the time of conquest. As these resources dwindled, the State had to seek for other fields to exploit, and, the initial alienations being what they were, the development of Tunisia came very largely to depend on the acquisition of lands suitable, and available for, purposes of settlement. The history of Tunisia since 1890, at least on the economic side, has largely been one of a search for lands.

The first gain was in the extreme south, where the extensive domain of the Siala family was declared State property in 1892. Here, to prevent a recurrence of the absenteeism which had so ruined the north, planting was made compulsory, and in consequence the *métayer* system, with the natives as tenants, flourished. The result was the transformation of the south: the Sfax and Zazis became the olive-lands *par excellence*; and by 1912, 6,000 natives and 150 Europeans were settled there on 144,000 hectares of land. A new province had been won for the State, and practically a new industry created. A spirit of energy unusual to Tunisian affairs had manifested itself, and the result was both clear gain and promise for the future.<sup>26</sup> But, after all, the incident was only an exception due to favourable circumstances and was in no sense a solution of the general land-problem. The State was still looking round and taking stock of its resources, and, with some diffidence, resolved to tackle the question of the *habous*, those religious lands which covered a third of the surface of Tunisia and which were clustered in the fertile northern regions.

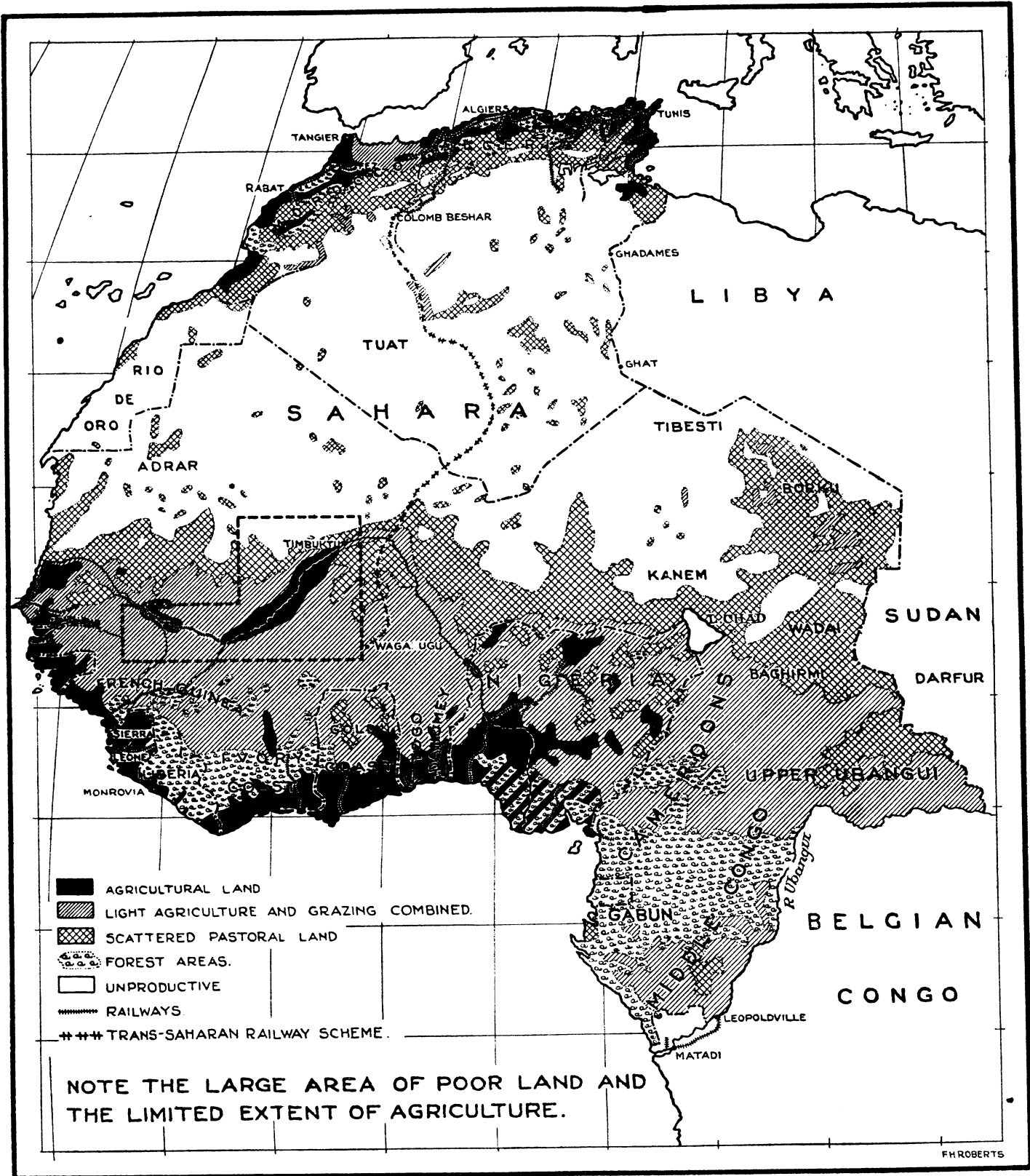
<sup>26</sup> Alapetite in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 31/1/12.

There were two kinds of *habous*, as in every Mohammedan country, —private and public. Both, however, were of similar origin. When a Moslem wished to tie up his lands to prevent his heirs squandering their resources (on the model of English entail) or to prevent confiscation by the Bey, he made it *habous*,—that is, he transferred it to some pious foundation: but the point was that he reserved the actual enjoyment of the land to his posterity, until his line was extinguished. It was handing over land to the “dead-hand” of the Church, with the transfer dating from the moment, but not becoming effective in practice until the extinction of the donor’s family. The land is called a private *habous* while still enjoyed by the family, and then becomes public.<sup>27</sup>

Under these circumstances, the Government was confronted with two vitally different problems. The one was to deal with land actually held by the Church, and the other to cope with land held by individuals but tied up for ultimate clerical ownership. Naturally, the public *habous*, those which had already reverted to the Church, were the least difficult to tackle, because with them religious resentment was not intensified and made immediate by personal interests. But France for long hesitated, as the *habous* question is always one of the most difficult that confronts a European Government in a Mohammedan country; and yet something had to be done, because this was not so much an obscure point of Koranic law as a pressing public issue. First, therefore, the public *habous* were attacked and were made available to settlement by the device of letting them on what really amounted to a perpetual lease (1898). This was the only way of surmounting the difficulty imposed by their inalienable nature. But, ingenious as the device was, it did not suffice, because these public *habous* represented only the tag-end of the *habous* process, and the extinction of families was not a common occurrence in a polygamous society. By 1921, therefore, only “a dust of tiny parcels” remained of the public *habous*, and the State was as hard pressed as ever to find lands for settlement.

There was thus no other alternative than to try to secure the far greater area locked up in private *habous*. Various attempts had been made in the preceding thirty years to make these available, but every one failed because of the concerted opposition of the natives. This was an interference with religion, it was held, although it is a curious point that the absorption of the public *habous*, which involved no interference with the economic privileges of individual Tunisians, had not aroused much comment on this score, although the objection would have had

<sup>27</sup> J. Terras, *Essai sur les Biens Habous en Algérie et en Tunisie*, p. 12; Alapetite in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 30/1/12; article in *Compte Rendu du Congrès de l’Afrique du Nord* (1909), Vol. II, p. 385.



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greater relevance! But, logic to one side, any attempt to interfere with private *habous* succeeded only in uniting the *Vieux Turbans* and the *Jeunes Tunisiens*, who, however divided on secular policies, were at least equally Moslems,—and equally menaced by the economic implications of the transformation! Moreover, it was held that the inalienability of these lands was something to be fostered rather than attacked, because it safeguarded the natives against improvidence. On the other hand, the Government was in dire need of land, for the public *habous* of the north were practically exhausted and those of the centre were not available, because of the large native population dependent on them. The only alternative to touching the private *habous*, argued the Government, was economic stagnation, or rather a double stagnation, because the private *habous* were largely unimproved and were deteriorating in value, as well as holding up the future advance of the colony. There was no incentive for progressive methods or energy, and so “juridical immobilization came to involve economic stagnation.” But the natives cared little for ponderous phrases of this kind, and, crying their privileges, readily turned to the cause of militant Islam.<sup>28</sup>

In the face of this situation, a Colonization Commission in 1904 recommended that private *habous* should come under the same rules as public ones, and other reports were in a similar vein. Then again, in 1920, there was a scheme to differentiate between the *habous* and to take over the uncultivated or ruined portions, vesting them in a joint management of natives and Government, and dividing the receipts between the religious foundation concerned and the State. Unfortunately, however, the scheme was launched at a particularly inauspicious moment, when the native mind was seething with repressed discontent and when the spirit of rebellion was in the air. There is a time and manner in dealing with Mohammedan religious issues, and certainly not when *any* proposal emanating from the Government, whatever its nature, would appear as an irritant to an open wound. Launched without proper preparation and at a delicate moment, the proposal inevitably led to a *furor*, and Tunisia quivered on the verge of a revolt, engendered by other causes, but coming to a head and centring round this *habous* question. The scheme was a good one under ordinary conditions; in 1920, with the discontent dominating native minds, it was the height of foolishness.

The present position, therefore, is that the Government has resolved to utilize neglected *habous*-land but dares not put its policy into operation, because of previous failures and the fear that the problem is no longer one of economics, or even of religion, but of racial pride. The overwrought natives have made this issue the test-case, and in their warped

<sup>28</sup> Article in *L'Afrique Française*, July 1920, p. 228.

eyes it means to them the existence or otherwise of their separate society. If they give in on this matter, their lands, their religious sanctions, and even their racial distinctness,—the very fact of their existence as an entity, will go, so they conceive. Then, with this gone, they see themselves drifting, without religion or society, hopeless and suffering, in an alien civilization. The Tunisian can be an artist in excoriating the wound of his own misery. The land question has thus been swept into the whirlpool of racial passions and religious hate, and the Tunisian race stands back to the wall, fighting for that indefinable spark which means the survival or the decline of their particular civilization: and thus the issue is not one of economics, not one of dealing tactfully with Koranic law, but the fate of the soul of a people. It has passed from concrete issues to an intangible world of emotion and principles, and for this changed orientation French tactlessness must be blamed as much as native susceptibilities in the post-war era. But, whatever the cause, the very existence of such a psychological attitude makes the problem, a difficult one under any circumstances, almost insoluble.<sup>29</sup>

The dominant fact of Tunisian economy therefore remains the land-shortage. The domain-lands and the public *habous* have gone, and the private *habous* are sacrosanct and protected by a wall of unreasoning prejudice. The only way out, apart from repurchase of land held by Companies and the taxation of large estates, would seem to be by aiding the conversion of communal land into individual, but, as has been seen, collective land is not as important in Tunisia as elsewhere in North Africa. Nevertheless, it amounts to a good deal in the aggregate. To facilitate this conversion, Cambon at an early date (1885) introduced a modified form of the Torrens system,—the system of land registration and transfer which had so simplified Australian land-transactions. By this, a document is given to show the title to the land and anybody can see at a glance all the claims against it,—a particularly important desideratum in a country where landownership is complicated by religious factors and vague traditional influences. With the aid of the lay and religious leaders of the Moslem community, Cambon investigated the whole situation and gave a precise code of land-guarantees. He cleared up the situation and, by the aid of the Torrens system, relieved the Tunisian land-system of the accumulated heritage of past legal encumbrances and made land-transfer as safe and as easy as selling a donkey.<sup>30</sup>

But this was only the first step towards the goal aimed at, and provided the means by which land *could* be easily transferred and registered, if the

<sup>29</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, June 1921, p. 187 *et seq.*

<sup>30</sup> Article by Martineau in *Compte Rendu du Congrès de l'Afrique du Nord* (1909), Vol. XXI, p. 217 *et seq.*

owners desired it. To go from that, however, to the breaking-up of collective estates was a long step, and, unless such spoliation as had occurred in Algeria was to be allowed, meant a slow development. The Government was torn between the conflicting ideals of safeguarding their land to the natives and yet of providing land for settlement. In 1901, for instance, it decreed that collective lands were to be inalienable; but this, while safeguarding native interests, did nothing to solve the land-shortage. Therefore, a committee of investigation (1910-12) sought a way by which the natives, while sending their lands along the path that Cambon had so carefully marked out, could obtain an adequate compensation. But the conflict of interests remains, for one side has to suffer: and, although the Government favours gradual individualization, it realizes that the change has to come naturally, and that such an inflation of public opinion as has been evident since 1912 renders any forced change most impolitic.

Therefore, it simply has to stand aside and trust that the natives will avail themselves of the facilities provided by Cambon,—but their wait is long and their reward little. At first the simplicity of the Torrens system and its freedom from complications attracted the natives, and 750,000 hectares were immatriculated or registered by 1902. Then this feeling gave way to quite a different one, when it was realized that the very ease of transfer under the new system was a decided drawback, because the old complications at least had the effect of retaining the land in native hands and deterring speculators. Up to 1914, therefore, only 5,405 native proprietors in all came under the Torrens system: the rest preferred to keep the old methods with all their uncertainty and cumbrousness; and, by 1920, only 1,702,873 hectares were registered, and most of this by Europeans. Simplicity is not the only desideratum of a native system, especially when the said simplicity is conducive to unwise alienation of native rights. The Torrens system has become tabooed by the natives as a device which is aimed not so much at giving them security and a simple tenure, as at placing a premium on hasty transfer, and thus playing into the hands of the Unbelievers. Since 1909, therefore, there has been practically no utilization of its provisions by the natives,—another reminder of the unimportance of logic in dealing with natives.<sup>31</sup>

As a result of this failure, Tunisia has practically no State-land and no reserves, either actual or potential, for purposes of settlement. Unless something can be done to break up the large unused estates, the country

<sup>31</sup> Bessis, *Essai sur la loi foncière tunisienne* (1912), especially pp. 62, 100 *et seq.*, for reforms needed. For paucity of results, see Bismut (1922), *op. cit.*, p. 229, or *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1919, p. 203.

is thus at the end of its tether, because there is no land for new Europeans. Those who are already there are holding their lands idle as a speculation, and the natives keep theirs for their age-old agricultural methods.

A consequence of this dilemma is that agriculture is in a deplorable state, and in a country where, as de Lanessan pointed out, there are most of the conditions under which it should prosper. The native agriculturists are rarely owners, and the *Khames*, really a serf, cares little about bettering the soil or improving his methods. Despite this, native agriculture under the French has increased from two to five million hectares, and, given sufficient credit-facilities, should increase still further.

The stimulation of this improvement has always been a prominent feature of the Government's programme, especially under Resident-General Alapetite (1906-1918), who, seeing that the country's development could not be in the hands of absentee capitalists, turned to the natives and the average European colonists to provide a more solid basis for growth. He arranged for agricultural credit-banks and societies, and, by a decree of 1909, made membership compulsory, the natives paying a certain tax in return for the credit-facilities thus provided. But droughts remained the scourge of the land (the whole native credit-scheme, for instance, was almost wrecked by the drought of 1907-1908), and there was therefore a turn to long-term loans in order to allow aid over a period of years, and to agricultural education, which would increase production under the poor conditions pertaining in Tunisia. This again was due to Alapetite, who made education "essentially social, and practical, and useful for the natives in their everyday existence." Government aid, credit-facilities, and improved methods of education,—those were his panacea; and he stressed them the more because he saw that the impossibility of making more land available for purposes of European colonization made the country practically dependent on a greater productivity by those persons already on the land.<sup>32</sup> The limitation of future development, in other words, made the prosperity of the existing settlers the *sine qua non* of Tunisian stability, because hereafter there was no longer the alternative of an unlimited settlement by immigrants, such as had been available up to Alapetite's time. The position had to be looked at as it existed then, and the Government's action determined, not by any dream of that system of rural economy that it would have liked, but by the hard facts of the existing distribution

<sup>32</sup> For his work, see his speeches in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 27, 30/1/12,—a general review of Tunisian history. The long debate on the Tunisian loan in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 25/11/11-4/12/12, is one of the fundamental sources of Tunisian history.

of Tunisian land. The land had gone and, as it appeared, could not be reshuffled: all that could be done was to make its utilization by the existing holders more and more efficient. The land-problem had changed its form since 1906, and it was no longer a measure of practical politics to speak of the ideal class of rural settlers: dreams of that kind had to be kept in the background and the best made of an unpalatable situation. Hence the stress on native agriculture and the provision of credit-facilities for small settlers. The Government was adopting an unwelcome *pis aller* which circumstances had forced on it and had perforce abandoned rapid transformations for a steady and limited advance on what was already there.

## COMMERCE

Despite the above difficulties, Tunisia remains essentially an agricultural country, and its commerce, as in Algeria, is determined by that fact. Its commerce has always been limited by its agricultural and phosphate production, and even the much-vaunted desert trade is significant as compared with these. In all, the economic history of Tunisia has been a steady and quiet progress, with few interruptions and little that was spectacular about it. The first positive gain from French rule was order and security, and the results at once became manifest. Within four years after 1884, when the consular jurisdictions and the burden of the international Financial Commission went,<sup>33</sup> a solid budgetary *régime* was instituted, commerce doubled, tax-receipts trebled, twelve million francs were spent on agriculture by Frenchmen, and, in all, France had spent 153 million francs on the country.<sup>34</sup> And this steady consolidation continued, as the table of commerce shows:—

REPRESENTATIVE YEARS.	EXPORTS. (Millions of Francs.)	IMPORTS.
1879-1880 . . .	22·240	
1884-1885 . . .	45·514	
1890-1891 . . .	81·934	—French Customs law of 1890.
1895 . . . . .	44·000	41·000
1896-1900 (average)	41·485	54·215—genesis of phosphate exports.
1901-1905 ( do. )	60·400	77·200—drought.
1907 . . . . .	103·361	102·860
1912 . . . . .	153·656	156·293
1913 . . . . .	178·663	144·254—last normal year.

What this progress lacks in specularity, it makes up for in stability, and Tunisia's advance, like that of Madagascar and Indo-China, has been

<sup>33</sup> De Clercq, *Recueil des Traités*, Vol. XX, p. 596 et seq.; *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 1-8/4/84.

<sup>34</sup> Ferry in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 2/3/88.

consolidated at every step. There has not been the ebb and flow of Algeria, and Tunisia knew neither the inflation that Algeria had in the eighties nor its pessimistic stagnation of the nineties. Trade, like most other things in Tunisia, has been a gradual creeping onwards, without haste and without fuss, but none the less steadily and efficiently. A certain quiet progressiveness is the key-note.

Up to 1900 the bulk of the exports were farm-produce, especially the cereals of the temperate zone. The early enthusiasm for vineyards was soon undermined, as Tunisia could never hope to vie with Algeria in this regard, and so, since 1908, the area in vines has kept fairly constant round 14,000 to 18,000 hectares. But, as the vine subsided into secondary importance, the olive, Tunisia's specialty, emerged, until it became the most important industry, especially in the centre. Already, by 1901, it claimed almost twenty-five times as much land as its rival, and the proportion has been increasing since that time. In all, Tunisia depends, so far as agriculture is concerned, on the olive and cereals, and the limit in neither direction is in sight. The cereal-area has gradually spread from 530,000 hectares in 1880 to 777,000 in the very good year of 1898-1899 and to 1,177,000 by 1916, but it is estimated that this could easily be doubled, if public works and credit were provided and the necessary land made available. The difficulties in the way of advance in Tunisia are not natural but artificial.

Outside of this agriculture, Tunisia has no staple except mining. The pastoral industry is not as important as in Algeria, and has declined continuously since the conquest. To prevent too great a dependence on the seasons, therefore, there was an eager turn to the development of the subsoil riches, and any unwonted impetus that Tunisian commerce and economic development have received must be attributed directly to this source. Indeed, the history of the land may very well be written in terms of the phosphate industry, for that accounted for the increased rate of development after 1900. Up till then, there had merely been a gradual and limited development of crops, but by that year the new industry had been stabilized, and, in addition to affording, as it were, a safety-valve to the Tunisian economic machine, had become an integral part of the works and had directly stimulated progress in other fields. The industry brought to Tunisia far more than payment for the amount of phosphate shipped every year from Sfax: the renewed activity and the greater optimism and the wider horizons contemplated all transformed the general situation, and Tunisia went ahead with a bound.

Till 1885, the only phosphates known in the world were those of Northern France and the Carolina-Florida region, but in that year extensive deposits were located round Gafsa and, next year, at Tibessa. French

capital, with its customary mistrust of colonial speculations, stood aloof, the more so because this was the very crux of the period of anti-colonialism in Paris, and so the exploitation of Tibessa was left to Scotsmen. But its immediate success led the French to intervene, and the "phosphate railway" was built from Gafsa to Sfax in Southern Tunisia,—the precursor of two others. The industry, from this time on, had a phenomenal advance, and exports jumped from 70,000 tons in 1899 to over one million in 1907 and over two million by 1913, despite an acute crisis in 1908–1909. In all, nearly 16 million tons were exported by 1915, 70 per cent. of which was from Gafsa alone: in other words, 348 million francs had been added to Tunisia's exports, and the markets for the produce were widening every year.<sup>35</sup>

But, despite cereals and olives and phosphates, the land was not developing as rapidly as could reasonably be expected, because, to some extent, it was shackled by an unwise fiscal system. France did not have a clean slate in Tunisia and had to recognize the pre-existing trade-treaties and commercial arrangements,—anathema to the country which, after 1892, had made a rigid protectionism the very nerve-centre of its colonial system and which was forced to see this country, at the gateways of the motherland, a glaring exception.<sup>36</sup>

The position was really absurd. France to all intents and purposes owned Tunisia; but the country was in commercial vassalage to foreign Powers, especially England and Italy, to whom "most-favoured-nation" treatment had been conceded in the palmy days of concession-hunting before the conquest. France was not one of the Powers so favoured, and so it followed that foreigners had, and insisted on, rights superior to those of France in a French region of control! France had to stand aside and see all her goods paying a flat rate of eight per cent. on entering Tunisia, while the products of six foreign Powers entered at lower rates! This anomalous position continued until 1897, when Italy and England relinquished their rights, although wresting financial concessions for English cotton goods and Italian fisheries respectively.

Not unnaturally, seeing the protectionist state of feeling in France, Frenchmen did not feel amicably disposed towards Tunisian goods and crushed them under the "general tariff." That means to say, Tunisian goods on entering France had to pay the highest rates, and more than the goods of any country which had a commercial treaty with France. Tunisian wines, for instance, paid 2½ times as much as Italian wines, and this was no small factor in crushing the land's nascent viniculture.

<sup>35</sup> H. Lorin, *L'Afrique du Nord* (1908), p. 298; de Lanessan (1917), *op. cit.*, pp. 26–30.

<sup>36</sup> J. L. de Lanessan, *Principes de Colonisation* (1897), p. 187.

France, exasperated by her helpless position in Tunisia's commerce, gave vent to that exasperation by treating the helpless Tunisia not only as a foreign but as an enemy country. Somewhat illogically, she retaliated to the ban on her goods in Tunisia by a corresponding ban on Tunisian goods in France, thus depriving herself of certain commodities she needed and hampering the development of her dependency. But there were two ameliorations. The Government was so preoccupied in scourging Tunisian sea-borne commerce that it omitted to run a land-barrier between Algeria and Tunisia, the result being that Tunisian goods entered Algeria free of duty and could thus go to France at a low rate. Secondly, "a happy rush of Chauvinism did in a moment what a thousand good reasons had not been able to effect in half a dozen years," when England, despite prior French rights, set up a protectorate in Zanzibar. To harm English trade elsewhere, both houses of the French Parliament, in one session and almost unanimously, voted for the free admission of the leading Tunisian products. The lesser resentment against Tunisia had to give way before the greater resentment against England.<sup>37</sup>

Economic considerations counted not at all; but, none the less, Tunisia obtained a breathing-space, and its colonists were enabled to escape the ruin that threatened most of them. The public hostility of France had been ruining the land, but this compromise allowed it to carry on until the general clearing of the atmosphere by the treaties of 1898. In the following year, both the export and import trade of the land were regulated in light of the changed conditions. Naturally, the Tunisian market was opened to French products, for the cry of "markets" was still on the lips of every Chamber of Commerce in France, and a decree of 1904 went further in openly discriminating against foreign cereals.<sup>38</sup> The move was clearly to assimilate Tunisia to the ultra-protectionist *régime* of the French colonies and to capture her markets; but with as little success as elsewhere, because the proportion of French imports into Tunisia only increased from 55 per cent. in 1897 to 60 per cent. ten years later, and could not pass this level. To force the desired development, therefore, Tunisia was opened free to all French products in 1919, although this involved an immediate deficit of 2½ million francs in the local budget. Tunisia, either voluntarily or by force, had to take French trade, and the land was bludgeoned into conformity with the usual French system.<sup>39</sup>

In return, Tunisia received a right of free entry into France for her cereals and, up to a certain quantity, for her wines and oils and pastoral

<sup>37</sup> Vignon, *La France dans L'Afrique du Nord* (1888), p. 161; Leroy-Beaulieu (1905), *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 13, 14.

<sup>38</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 21/5/04 (interpellation on Tunisian trade), followed by decree of 19/7/04.

<sup>39</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, 1919, p. 185.

products. But this proviso was elastic, and the Tunisians rigorously demanded that, if they had to accept French products, they should at least receive the *quid pro quo* of a complete opening of French markets to their produce and the disappearance of the tariff-boundary on the Algerian frontier. Even then, they held, the position would be inadequate, because the primary need of an agricultural country is for cheap manufactured goods from abroad ; and besides, France was not involving herself in any disadvantage in taking the cereals that she so greatly needed.

The balance of advantages, even with a complete reciprocity, would be unequal, it is argued ; but, in the one-sided state of affairs which has pertained since 1898, the inequality is the more marked and it is meaningless to speak of a balance. It is the old case, so familiar in the history of French colonization, of a territory being assimilated willy-nilly, and having its economic development deliberately sacrificed to the altar of the mother-country's interests. Every part of the colonial structure is subservient to France and French interests,—so runs the French colonial creed, and this applies as much to Tunisia as to any completely French colony. Thus, even since 1898, the tariff-*régime* has always been a thorn in the side of Tunisia's progress,—an obstacle to be overcome, and not only a handicap in itself, but one exercising a wider irritant effect on Tunisian-French relations.

#### IV. The Foreign Populations

It has been seen that both the land and the tariff policies were direct incentives in turning the eyes of Tunisia towards Italy, and this, in view of the experience of Algeria and the geographical proximity of the Italian peninsula, should have been a tendency very closely watched by France. As it was, France seemed to be favouring a *dénouement* of this kind and erecting a wall of hostility between her interests and those of Tunisia. For all of these reasons, Italians came to Tunisia in ever-increasing numbers after the seventies, and especially after the construction of the Bone-Guelma railway. They afforded the labour-supply for the public-works and mines, and practically monopolized the worlds of labour and small commerce. Their number increased again after the programme of public works in 1898 ; and the ease with which they became acclimatized and the lower subsistence-level in Tunisia accounted for a steady trickle of immigration from Italy.

By about 1900, however, something like a stabilization of their numbers was attained, and hereafter natural increase rather than immigration was the main reason of their progress. The failure of viniculture discouraged the rural element and directed it towards Algeria. Indeed,

“ it can be said that the failure of the vines has saved Tunisia from the Italian invasion,”<sup>40</sup> and, although this is somewhat exaggerated, it rightly emphasizes what has been a negative safeguard of Tunisia. Moreover, the Kabyles of Algeria and the natives of Tripolitania began to push the Italians from public works and to restrict them to the lower ranks of commerce. The labouring and farming classes of Italians were thus dealt severe blows, and Italian immigration came to be confined to certain classes. Nevertheless, as the table shows, they have become the predominant element in the land, even more so than have the Spaniards in Algeria :—

	French.	Italians.	M&lt;lt;tese.
1881 . . . .	700	11,200	7,000
1886 . . . .	3,500	16,750	9,000
1891 . . . .	10,000	11,000	11,700
1896 . . . .	16,000	55,000	10,200
1901 . . . .	24,000	71,000	12,000
1906 . . . .	34,600	81,156	10,000
1911 . . . .	46,000	88,082	11,300
1921 . . . .	54,447	84,819	—
1926 . . . .	71,020	89,215	8,395

It must be emphasized, however, that these official French statistics do not show the situation in its true light, as both French and Italian critics have demonstrated the falsity of the various Census-returns. Carletti, an Italian expert, showed that the figures of the nineties were clearly too low in so far as the Italians were concerned, because the increase of births over deaths alone would have shown a quicker rate of progress than the census revealed ; and he claimed that by 1900 there were at least 80,000 Italians in Tunisia. Even the French, Fidel for instance, showed that the Census of 1906 was useless, because it neglected illiterates who did not trouble to fill in their papers ; and that of 1911 was still worse, because, although the Italians were admittedly more than twice as numerous, they increased only by 6,926 according to the Census, whereas the French had gone up by 11,434, and immigration could not account for the difference. As far as the Italians alone were concerned, natural increase, as in preceding periods, would have meant a far larger increase, quite irrespective of new immigration. Figures of the Italian *Pubblica Sicurezza* therefore claimed 102,885 Italians in Tunisia by 1908 and 105,684 in 1909, and the *Bolletino dell' Emigrazione* held

<sup>40</sup> J. Saurin, *L'Œuvre française en Tunisie*, p. 12. Articles in *Quinzaine Coloniale*, Dec. 1901-Jan. 1902.

conservatively that at least 100,000 Italians were resident there. Some French experts, Chappdelaine in 1911 for instance, reached a similar conclusion, and the French colonial organ, *L'Afrique Française*, after a close investigation, asserted that there were 130,000 Italians as against 30,000 Frenchmen in Tunisia (1911).<sup>41</sup>

Despite this, the Census of 1921 gave 84,819 Italians to 54,447 Frenchmen,—a clearly impossible estimate, as Tumedei, the Italian statistician, demonstrated. Chappdelaine also adhered to his previous estimate, and it is asserted that the compiler in charge of the Census-report stated in an interview that the real numbers were 130,000 and 40,000; and this would certainly square with the position in the past. The official position was the less tenable, because the French element had been weakened far more than the Italian by the war, and because, while the drift of the Frenchmen from the land was noticeable, a new onrush of Italians set in in 1919–1920, spurred by the pressure of poverty in Italy and by the greater depreciation of the franc than the lira. The official French attitude, however, does not change, and the Census-report of 1926 states that, owing to the falling-off of public works since 1918 and an active French policy of naturalization, the Italian element is declining, and already numbers only 89,215 to the French 71,020.

Yet the actual numbers matter little: the point is that it is beyond dispute that the Italians in Tunisia are in a large majority, and have always been in a large majority. There is thus much support for the Italian contention that “Tunisia is an Italian colony governed by the French,” and that “Italian manhood and French silver” is a just epitome of Tunisian history since 1880. The Italians have become numerically predominant, and Tunisia is far more of a foreign colony than even Algeria. France cannot even have the satisfaction of terming the Italians Frenchmen as she has done in Algeria, and thus effectively hiding the real state of affairs by an indiscriminate extension of the rights of citizenship, because the automatic naturalization law which solves the difficulty in France and Algeria has no counterpart in Tunisia, and there are few individual naturalizations,—indeed, only 1,607 in the twenty-eight years before 1919! The Italians come as Italians and remain Italians, and it is precisely this lack of absorption, even of juridical and nominal absorption, that so markedly differentiates Tunisia from Algeria. In Algeria the problem is to a certain degree self-annulling, but in Tunisia it becomes more clearly defined with the passage of the years, and the two racial blocs stand, not confused as in Algeria, but in serried ranks of hostile groups.

<sup>41</sup> C. Tumedei, *La Questione Tunisina e l'Italia* (1922), p. 152 *et seq.* *L'Afrique Française*, 1919, p. 186; 1921, p. 41.

The question of status, therefore, is a very difficult one, and, affecting as it does the very existence of French control in the land, has provided the gravest problem in Tunisian history. The starting-point was the Conventions of 1896, which France accepted in order to induce Italy to relinquish her rights of trade-priority over Tunisia.<sup>42</sup> Italy has heretofore enjoyed a right of "most-favoured-nation" treatment, even over France, and would not give this up without adequate advantages. For her part, France wanted a free hand commercially, and, to obtain this, was prepared to make concessions to Italy's desire of safeguarding her nationals in Tunisia.

The Conventions of 1896 thus became a kind of charter of Italian liberties in Tunisia. By them, the Italians were allowed to sit on juries: they were immune from capital punishment, which did not exist in Italy: they could become lawyers or enter the other professions: the existing Italian schools were to be maintained: and the children of the immigrants were to remain Italians, and so on indefinitely, so that all of the unborn generations of Italian residents in Tunisia thus received every privilege of living in Italy, and for their children and their children's children as well as for themselves; and in addition they received the greater opportunities of a new country. Thus, "it is possible for an Italian in Tunisia to live his whole civil life from birth to death in an exclusively Italian environment. He marries at the Italian consulate, declares his children there, places them in Italian schools, is cared for at the Italian hospital by Italian doctors, reads Italian papers, and is a member of Italian societies; and his descendants for ever remain Italians."<sup>43</sup>

The position is really absurd in a European colony, and is unknown anywhere in the world, save where rights of extra-territoriality apply in certain Oriental countries. An immunity is conferred on the Italians from all attempts to assimilate them to the society in which they live; and thus France, to gain a purely temporary trade-advantage, for ever closed the door on the achievement of social unity in her possession. Tunisia, at the behest of the French manufacturers, was condemned to perpetual intestine division, and, so long as the Conventions of 1896 remained, unity in the land was but a dream,—as incapable of realization as Louis Bertrand's vision of a neo-African race reviving the old Romanization by a fusion of all the Mediterranean stocks in the north.

Nor have the Italians been slow to realize the implications of the immunities conferred on them. They have insisted on the last tithe of their privileges, the result being a large degree of Italian proselytism in

<sup>42</sup> In Tumedei (1922), *op. cit.*, p. 15 and Appendix IV, or *L'Afrique Française*, March, 1921, p. 82.

<sup>43</sup> Rood Balek, *L'Afrique Française*, 1921, p. 73.

Tunisia, openly in defiance of French efforts of assimilation. And the point is that this development is not natural: it is deliberately forced and inevitably becomes distinct from, and then opposed to, French efforts; and under the circumstances, it is but a small step from a privileged *enclave* to a predominant section. The Italians perceived that the French had practically bartered away their heritage in Tunisia, and thus increased their separatism and their power year by year,—and all quite legally. This has been more noticeable since 1910, because, up to that time, the steady economic advance of all sections had the effect of turning endeavours from racial spheres to economic. Everybody shared in the economic revival after the development of the phosphate-industry, and, in the general prosperity, a distinct *rapprochement* between the two racial sections could be discerned. But after 1910 the *intransigents* recovered control of the Italian settlers; and the weakening of the French element during the war, coinciding as it did with a new spirit of unrest on the part of the natives, acted once more as a direct incentive to the assertion of Italian claims.

The French were giving way numerically; for, from 1915 to 1919, there were 4,942 French deaths to 3,116 births, quite distinct from the weakening of the French element by conscription, which the Italians did not have so severely. Consequently, the Italians forged ahead, and in every way became a more powerful and more unified *bloc*. Rather unfortunately, too, the French began at this stage to abandon their emphasis on “the policy of association,” and to talk, as in Numa-Leal’s *Le Péril Italien* (1913), of “an Italian menace,” “Italian *irridentism*,” and the like. Instead of attempting to bridge the growing chasm, they widened it, and reinforced their steadily growing weakness by a more and more assertive opposition. As the facts turned against them, they became increasingly vociferous, the new bombastic attitude assuming its height in Flandin’s policy of “Gallicization” after 1918. Alapetite, with his customary tact, had stressed association and agreement in difference, but his successor stood for assimilation to a strictly French model.<sup>44</sup>

The Italian position came to be based on economic rivalry and French exclusion, and was given an emotional intensity hitherto unknown by reason of the changes in Italy and the pronounced irridentist feeling which emerged in Tunisia in consequence. By 1920 the Italians had secured control of the vine-industry and were intrenching themselves on the land; and in industry they provided the majority of European workers and arrayed themselves against their French employers. A cleavage on racial lines was thus complicated by a corresponding economic difference, just at the moment when racial egotisms were unduly excited on

<sup>44</sup> Tumedei (1922), *op. cit.*, p. 63 *et seq.*

both sides. The leading organ of Italian opinion, *L'Unione*, in August, 1918, urged a virtual revolt as a protest against the increased cost of living and the decision of the conditions of life by French employers; and this attitude persisted. To this was added the newly pugilistic force of Italian nationalism. The Rome Parliament had lively debates on the Tunisian question in 1920-1921, crystallizing in proposals for the direct representation of the Tunisian Italians in the Italian Parliament.

On the other side, the French had precipitated the issue and flung down the gage by Flandin's decrees of 1920 and 1921. He selected the matters of education and land-ownership as test-cases, because there the Italians were gaining the most conspicuously and standing in dramatic opposition to French claims. In these two matters he adopted the attitude that the Italians had either to conform voluntarily or else to be made to conform, by fair means or foul. Even *L'Afrique Française*, the French colonial organ, doubted the wisdom of this direct defiance, and, quoting the maxim "*Quieta non movere*," held that Flandin's zeal made him overlook practical considerations. As it was, he literally repeated the old cries of the assimilators of the eighties, and declared that "all our efforts must tend to fuse the Italian element in our schools." By two decrees of February, 1919, therefore, he strove to eradicate Italian influence on the land and in the schools,—in his own words, "to suffocate at one and the same time Italian rural settlement and educational propaganda." Existing language-schools were really to be throttled and all new ones prohibited; and thus the young Italians would have to go to French schools during their impressionable years.<sup>45</sup> The second decree instituted "an exceptional tax" on all transactions by which a native or Frenchman sold land to a foreigner,—a tax of from 50 per cent. to 80 per cent. of its increased value since 1914.

This was the answer to the new wave of Italian immigration which had set in in 1918 and which was attempting to re-vitalize Tunisian land-settlement. The effect would have been to have prevented the newcomers from obtaining land at all, because the Tunisian domain was so tangled that it was only by purchase that they could obtain land to settle. The measure was frankly an anti-Italian one: as the *Conférence Consultative* said, "it is national rather than financial in its character," and was introduced to meet a specific demographic peril and not to cope with the post-war budgetary crisis. Side by side with these two attacks, Flandin attempted a rearguard action by his attempts to absorb the Italians into the French electorate by an automatic-naturalization law, on the Algerian model,—and here he was supported by the moderate reformers, who could see no reason why the Algerian compromise could

<sup>45</sup> Tumedei (1922), p. 42 *et seq.*, for Italy's position.

not apply in Tunisia, or why it should be any more humiliating for the 130,000 Italians of Tunisia than it was for the 100,000 Italians of Algeria.

The two sides were thus clearly arrayed the one against the other. The French stood for a gradual assimilation of the two elements, with automatic naturalization for third-generation Italians and a withdrawal of the official nature of Italian schools as preliminary steps.<sup>46</sup> Of course, the unwise discriminations of Flandin had to be abandoned, and consequently the Bonin-Pichon Accord of September, 1919, equalized French and Italians in so far as land-sales were concerned, and promised equality of treatment to the private schools of both countries.<sup>47</sup>

Beyond that Italy refused to go, and claimed that the Conventions of 1896 were still to stand, because they meant that the French, in return for Italy's promise not to interfere in Tunisian matters, had agreed to safeguard the interests of the Italians there. As for relinquishing their Italian citizenship, the official Italian attitude placed that entirely outside the scope of discussion. It was held that it was better to have the Italians suffer material losses than to change their status in this direction. The Italian Government, therefore, limited itself to protesting against "this odious and systematic attempt to denationalize the Italians, and the consequent prevention of any form of commercial and industrial activity."<sup>48</sup> It fought for the *status quo*, with extra privileges for the Italian schools.

There the position still rests, dominated by a warlike atmosphere which acts as a direct deterrent of economic advance. The specific points at issue in 1919-1920 have been settled, but the ultimate question has in no sense been attacked, save in the direction of making the differences more acute and less reconcilable. Before this skirmish the difference between the two elements was stressed, but after it this difference had become a clear antagonism. Tunisia is a prey to race friction. The old attitude of a mutual development no longer holds, because the Italians want to extend their numerical preponderance into other fields of activity, and the French desire the more to retain their political and financial priority. The obvious way out is for a division of functions on the lines suggested by the Italian slogan, "French silver and Italian manhood," but the French are not disposed to admit their dependence on extraneous elements; and naturally such an attitude at once strengthens Italy's aloofness.

The position is further complicated by the proximity of Italian Libya

<sup>46</sup> The French position is in *L'Afrique Française*, March, 1921, p. 87, and *Revue Mondiale*, Feb. 1921.

<sup>47</sup> In Tumedei (1922), *op. cit.*, Appendix IX.

<sup>48</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, 1919, p. 187.

and by the imperialistic schemes of Italy itself. The faults are by no means all on one side. If the French have tried to harry the Italians into conformity, as with the land-tax and school-legislation, the Italians have at times gone from internal separatism to a passive treason, as for instance, in the campaign for the representation of the Italian *émigrés* in Rome, and in the agitations of *L'Unione*, their most powerful newspaper. Such an attitude precludes any settlement of the issues at stake, because it stresses the differences rather than the points in common.

In reality, French and Italians are complements rather than adversaries. Both supply elements necessary for the development of a new colony—elements which, in the main, the other could not supply: and, given a mutual toleration, such a division of powers would allow adequate scope for both. Moreover, if the lesson of Algeria means anything, such a mutual material development would involve a gradual *rapprochement*, because 44 per cent. of the Italians are already local-born, and differences can be noted between the Italians of North Africa and the mainland. If they were not forced into aggressive irridentism by the French, they would rather tend to fall into line with the Italians of Algeria and Morocco, and become simply "North Africans." Indeed, unless France is to lose Tunisia, such a development is inevitable. Italy provides the labour-supply, the small farmers, and the minor traders, and it is too late to deny or change this position: and, for her part, France provides the governmental, financial, and directing elements in general. There is thus a clearly defined dyarchy; and the way of advance, economic and otherwise, is by frankly recognizing the dependence of each element on the other, and by working in co-operation, rather than by stressing the differences and isolating each element in an armed camp, suspicious and recalcitrant.

### V. The Crisis after 1914

Up to 1914, Tunisia seemed the quietest and most stable of the French colonial ventures. There had never been a native question as there had been in Algeria: the Italians had for years been so prosperous as to forget separatist tendencies: the phosphate-industry was developing by leaps and bounds: the budget-position was sound: trade and agriculture were reflecting the general prosperity: and, beyond the perennial shortage of land, the horizon was clouded by no troublesome question. Even the land-question, as least in so far as it concerned the *habous* or religious lands, was deemed to be settled here in a way that provided a model for the other French colonies. Natives, French and Italians were alike progressing, and Tunisia was rapidly marching towards a fusion of interests between the various racial elements. The common bonds

were the prosperity of each since 1900 and the resultant spirit of toleration, or at least, of *laissez-faire*. The land seemed to have fewer problems and a more consistent record than any other sphere of French interest, and, despite the *habous* question and a nascent intransigence with the Italians, there seemed no doubt about the future.

It is the contrast between this practically untroubled position and the continual turmoil since 1912 that provides the touch of mystery in Tunisian history. To this date there was peace; after it the land became a veritable pandemonium, especially as regards natives and Italians and economic development; and the quiet consolidation, which had come to be a synonym for Tunisia, was all swept by the board. Referring to the previous state of affairs, de Lanessan, an ex-Governor-General of Indo-China and one of the leading colonial experts of France, had said:

“Of all our colonial establishments, Tunisia is without doubt the one which has developed most rapidly, the one that has demanded the least sacrifices from the metropolis, and the one in which there has been the most harmony between France and natives. It is also that in which the most useful works have been accomplished with the least *personnel*.”<sup>49</sup>

Every word of this judgment was in accord with the facts before 1912, but, transferred to events after that date, becomes an almost cynical mockery. Tunisia has literally been transformed, and, although no doubt the difficulties which have flared into sudden flame were emerging beneath the surface even in the period before 1912, most of them are new. Tunisian affairs have been re-orientated, and have come to be judged by an entirely different set of values. Hence comes the friction.

As has been seen, the war produced a weakening of the French element in Tunisia, both with regard to man-power and capital, and both relatively and actually. The response to this was immediate. The Italians renewed their immigration, spread to new economic fields, attempted to win control of land-settlement, monopolized labour, and asserted themselves in opposition to French capital. They gave cohesion to the whole of their efforts by an all-embracing nationalism, and constituted themselves a solid *bloc* desiring numerical and economic predominance.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, the natives flung aside their old passive acquiescence or co-operation, and raised a native question as acute as that of Algeria. The native question has not only dawned in Tunisia: it has become a positive menace to the French, and rapidly changed the balance of power in Tunisian affairs.

The first outburst was in 1912, the year in which Tunisia was caught

<sup>49</sup> de Lanessan, *La Tunisie* (1917 edition), p. iv.

<sup>50</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, May 1921, p. 147; Tumedei, p. 161.

up in the general unrest that characterized the Mohammedan world at that time.<sup>51</sup> Tunisia had always been especially sensible to the general vibrations which affect Islam, because it is so close to the Senussi strongholds and is thus so directly in contact with the religious fraternities and the fanatical influences in Islam. At first, however, such political and religious grievances were adopted only by the "Young Tunisians," the turbulent youth of the country who were looked at askance by the "*Vieux Turbans*," the traditionalists who looked backwards and emphasized the co-operation between French and Tunisians. They were flung together, however, by the land question. The threatened attack on the property of the religious foundations temporarily united the two sections, both those who looked forward to changes on European models and those who viewed the Koran as the only possible determinant of secular matters. It was this combination of men whose methods and objectives were so different that made native discontent well-nigh universal in the post-war crisis, and that made the movement so serious. It was not a mere outbreak of youthful exuberance as had been the "*Jeune Tunisien*" agitation of 1912, but a national revival, firmly based on economic and religious grievances and spreading to practically every section of the natives. "Our land and the Koran" might well have been the rallying-cry, and it was this, rather than the demand for European institutions by the *Jeunes Tunisiens*, that was the key-note of the movement. In fact, Tunisia was at the cross-roads. A position had arisen that could not be solved by the methods of Cambon and Alapetite, for, as with the Italians, it was the diametric differences that were being emphasized, and the "method of association" on which Cambon relied was meaningless under these conditions. One side had to give way: the rival claims had nothing in common, no bridge by which the gulf might be spanned, and the tragedy was that, given the respective premises in each case, both arguments were logical and reasonable.

The new alignment was being prepared all through the war-years. The natives suffered little, because of the agricultural nature of the country and the increased demand for their goods; but they had to pay increased taxes and they saw how the Italians were pressing to the front and the French giving way. There was no French immigration, births were fewer than deaths, conscription was taking a constant toll, and, to make matters worse, the dignified stand which the French had taken in the earlier years gave way to "a sort of frenzy of social suicide," which, especially after 1918, led the French proprietors to join the panic and sell their lands wholesale to foreigners and natives. In three years a tenth of the French patrimony was lost in this manner, Italians replac-

<sup>51</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, March, 1912, p. 108.

ing Frenchmen in the north-east, natives elsewhere, especially in the south.<sup>52</sup>

The moment seemed auspicious for an assertion of native claims, and, from 1918 onwards, the *Destour* movement, as their agitation was called, leaped into prominence in Tunisian life. There had been a rising in South Tunisia in 1915: now again, at the end of 1918, there was a "crisis of authority," when, to the psychological despair of the French was added a spirit of turbulence among the deserters and demobilized tribesmen who could not drop the idea of using their Leblés and who, despite stricter laws in certain directions, construed the concessions as weakness. The south became unsafe, the north uncertain, although the Lebel here gave way to the pen. Every year the list was swollen by a new grievance, so that the agitation could not die of inanition or tiresome repetition. In 1919 it was the repercussion of Italy's policy in Libya. Italy had given full nationality to her Libyan subjects in that year, allowing them both a right to vote under her own law and a right to maintain all of their old customs,—thus conferring, as it were, a double autonomy. Naturally, this acted as a direct irritant to the Tunisians, who, despite their more advanced state than their Libyan neighbours, had no political rights.<sup>53</sup> In 1920 it was the turmoil due to the publication of the famous anti-French work, *La Tunisie Martyre*, the work of Sheikh Taalbi, which rallied the reformers and crystallized native demands. In 1921 it was the quarrel over the private *habous*, which gave an immediately practical point to Taalbi's arguments. This threw all sections together for the time being, conservatives and reformers alike, and confronted France with the troublesome sight of a Tunisia *redivivus*, a new-born nationality. In 1922 it was the raised head-tax; and the effect of the new grievances each year was to re-vitalize the agitation at certain intervals and to prevent any diminution in its intensity. So that, whereas, in 1914, no reformer would have dared to have spoken against the Government in an open place and still less in a newspaper, in 1920-1921 there were frank seditious in the papers, manifestations in the streets, delegations to Paris, quasi-plots and movements for an economic boycott. The whole atmosphere had changed, and even the *Vieux Turbans*, immobile and conservative as they usually were, spoke of a Holy War. Indeed, the whole movement was permeated by a religious tinge. The *Destour*, with the "economic separatism" that was its method, appeared to the rural natives as the modern form of the Holy War,—and thus a straight path to the Paradise outlined in the Koran.

In face of this situation, the French departed from the traditional

<sup>52</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, 1921, pp. 283-285; 1922, p. 94.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, March-June 1919, pp. 189, 226.

policy of Cambon, whose last follower, Roy, had died in 1919, "without leaving disciples." His policy had been a paternal one, touching native institutions as little as possible and winning over the traditionalists, the *Vieux Turbans*, and the religious fraternities, and not troubling over those who wanted reform on European lines. But after his death the land was swept by what were called Wilsonian ideas, which, as applied to the native sphere, virtually meant a reversal of Roy's policy and a turn-back to assimilation on French models,—that is, a revival of the theory of 1789 and 1848 and 1870. The result was to emphasize the purely political aspect to the neglect of the religious and to turn to the *Jeunes Tunisiens* as against the *Vieux Turbans*. A series of paper-reforms was therefore passed and greatly modified native life, although there seemed to be no clear realization as to where they were tending. Given the religious nature of everything Tunisian, "they were tactics opposed to those which should have been chosen, and which vexed the Old Turbans without winning over the *Chebbia* (Youth) to us,—which saddened the Bedouins of the desert without conciliating the townsmen." <sup>54</sup>

The upshot of this departure from Cambon's policy was that the autonomy-demands of the reformers gave way to the *Destour* or independence-movement of the extremists. Supported by the lesson of events in Angora and Cairo, the *Destour* had become separatist and communist. A programme of "Eighteen Points" was drawn up, including responsible government and universal suffrage, the separation of powers, complete equality of opportunity for Tunisians in all posts, respect of *habous*, and a virtual independence: and the Bey, "in a moment of bad humour and discouragement," as the French said, signed this claim. <sup>55</sup>

By this time the movement was no longer one engineered by a foreign-trained *intelligentsia*-class which could not fit into the structure of native civilization: it was headed by the Tunisian nobles and rested on the support of the *bourgeois* classes and the small agriculturists. It was an expression of national opinion rather than a transitory ebullition. The French, therefore, had to abandon the policy of repression that they had attempted in 1920, and Resident-General Saint promised the separation of powers and direct representation to the natives. An official note of June, 1922, went further and promised a network of assemblies, both national and provincial, which would give the natives a chance to

<sup>54</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Mar. 1922, pp. 137, 138.

<sup>55</sup> Tumedei (1922), *op. cit.*, p. 197. All of Chap. XII is a good account of native unrest since the war. For French account, see *L'Afrique Française*, July 1922, p. 331, and discussion in *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 6/7/22.

express themselves and some right of control, especially in the economic sphere.

Decrees of July 13, 1922,<sup>56</sup> therefore, inaugurated an experiment unique in French colonization,—a series of economic councils which would hereafter be the leading feature in Tunisian organization and, as a comparison with the narrower development of Algeria and Indo-China will show, a vitally important experiment in general colonial policy. The “ words of discord and revolt ” to which Saint had referred in November, 1922, had borne fruit in a far-reaching innovation as regards colonial machinery ; and, whether wrested from France by force or not, this marks perhaps the most significant trend in recent French colonial theory. That this is so is evident when it is considered that, extended to their logical implications, these reforms will fill that gap between natives and government which has always been so evident in French colonization, and will link together the various elements on their only common ground,—economic interests.

At the bottom of the pyramid of 1922 were the *caïdat* councils, which were local groups in each administrative subdivision. These consisted of natives alone, two from each *cheikhât*, and their functions were to discuss economic matters of all kinds and to nominate representatives to the wider provincial councils. They were, so to speak, economic *liaison*-groups between the Government and the scattered local groups of natives. Through them, every rural group would be made articulate, so that the Government would know in the aggregate what the people were thinking and what was their actual economic position, and would thus be able to base policy on the facts of the situation instead of on preconceived theories. Moreover, in an uneducated and scattered rural community like Tunisia, such a system of local councils afforded the only means of securing representatives of the villages in the provincial councils. The most backward community of Sfax or the Soussi had obtained both representation and articulation, and the veriest tribesman of the desert had become linked on to the general structure, now that there was a clear connection between the city of Tunis and the smallest *cheikhât*.

The next element in the system, and indeed its central feature, was the Regional Council. Tunisia was divided into five regions (Bizerta, Tunis, Ref, Sousse, Sfax), each of which had a council with clearly defined economic attributes. Representation was to be on the panel-idea so favoured by the French,—that is, interests rather than individuals or districts were to form the basis. To each regional council, representatives were to be elected from the *caïdat* councils above, from the municipal

<sup>56</sup> Full text is in *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1922, pp. 247-261.

councils, and from the Chambers of Agriculture and Commerce; and, in addition, a nominated official element was provided for. As with the *caïdat* councils, these wider bodies were to be solely economic. They were to have the same functions as the smaller councils in standing as the interpreters of local opinion to the Government, and, in addition, were to have budgets of their own. They could levy taxes and, if need be, raise loans. In fact, Tunisia was divided into a confederacy of five distinct budgetary regions in each of which taxation was to be proportioned to local needs and local capabilities. As a safeguard, however, provision was made for a French majority, and the regional bodies were not, like the *caïdat* councils, for natives only.

At the top of the new structure was the Grand Council, which replaced the old *Conférence Consultative*, the only legislative body in Tunisia up to this time. As in the other French colonies, it had been simply a body representing the various sections of the population and advising the Government on financial matters. It was an embryonic legislature which, especially since 1919, had been subjected to severe criticisms. In the College called "Commercial," for instance, commercial representatives were in a minority; and even the functionaries, the official element, joined the opposition and adopted a sabotage-policy. In all, a majority of two of the French Colleges and a strong minority of the natives demanded reform, and in particular a more adequate representation of the economic interests.<sup>57</sup>

The Grand Council, therefore, goes further in this direction, and carries the idea of an economic council as far as it may well go. It has two sections, French and native, as in the body it replaced, and all representation is on the college-idea. It is a body representing and purporting to balance the various interests,—governmental, French, and native. Save for the representation of the French colony, there is no direct election, and French representatives are in an absolute majority. But it is not the composition so much as the functions of the body that are important, because, while the one simply follows the usual French colonial model, the other is definitely new. In the first place, the body is economic and in no sense political. One clause of the decree creating it distinctly says: "The discussion of all political or constitutional matters is forbidden."<sup>58</sup> The essential duty of the Grand Council is to examine the Budget, the point in this connection being that, if both native and French sections advise alike, the Government cannot pass over the advice so proffered. Here is the importance of the reforms of 1922,—that they

<sup>57</sup> For faults, see *L'Afrique Française*, Jan. 1922, p. 29, or *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1923, p. 186.

<sup>58</sup> Section 12 of second decree of 13/7/22.

confer a large degree of economic self-government on Tunisia, and it must be remembered that, in the peculiar conditions of French colonial policy, economic advance has always preceded political advance. On the other hand, seeing that they were dealing with a fanatical Mohammedan country rent by sedition, and with the discord aided by an outright majority of European foreigners, the French could afford to take no chances. Hence, the competency of the Grand Council was limited in two directions. Firstly, there was a dyarchy, with certain matters, such as the debt, the Civil List, justice, and "all expenses affecting the security of the State," reserved from the Council's discussion: and then again, "reasons concerning public order or the moral or material interests of France" were deemed to be sufficient pretexts for the Government to override the reforms.<sup>59</sup>

The Tunisian reforms of 1922 thus resolved themselves into a series of economic councils with the natives preponderant in the local assemblies, but with their power diminishing as the councils became more important and dealt with wider problems. The constitution was an elastic one, capable either of retaining the existing position intact or allowing an indefinite expansion. Everything depended on the interpretation given the new charter, which at least gave a positive economic expression and a possible economic power to the settlers and natives of Tunisia. The decrees of 1922 crystallize French policy in native countries, and, as a comparison with the somewhat similar Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in India will show, express the economic paths which the French have chosen in preference to the English political ones.

The first councils, both regional and national, met in November-December, 1922, and the Grand Council, in its opening session,<sup>60</sup> showed clearly that it was to be no *fainéant* body, but a distinct influence on State finance. It rejected most of the taxes proposed by the administration and substituted a customs-tax for them, declaring that indirect taxation should be the basis of the fiscal system. There the matter stands at present. Tunisia is at the dawn of a period of economic self-government, and it is expected that this will do much to divert the natives from the *Destour* and the Italians from their separatist campaigns, and thus weld the community into something like the unity of the pre-war years, with each section contributing to the general prosperity and benefiting from that prosperity. The crisis remains, however, both politically and financially. As M. Saint, the Resident-General, said in 1921, there was an economic travail intensified by a certain social *malaise*, as a result

<sup>59</sup> Sections 7, 22.

<sup>60</sup> Opening Speech in *L'Afrique Française*, Dec. 1922, p. 554, and proceedings in Jan. 1923, p. 31.

of which each section of the population was advancing extreme claims,—claims which were not so much critical suggestions as signs of an unsettled neurosis. And it was the “moral crisis,” the feeling of psychological repression and thwarted instincts, that made the economic crisis so severe, although this in itself was sufficiently grievous. The budget was unbalanced; the only industrial activity was mining; and the capricious climate weakened agriculture in a country where the whole basis of existence was primary production.<sup>61</sup>

In face of this position, the French are endeavouring to get back again in the psychology of 1914 and to eradicate the subsequent bitterness by resuming the earlier policy of association and traditionalism,—the “protectorate” policy of Paul Cambon. A mutual development in difference is the aim, but with a solidarity of economic interests and a division of labour infusing the necessary unity of direction into these varied efforts. That is, there is to be divergent evolution, coupled with a large degree of social and racial autonomy, within certain clearly expressed limits. There is to be economic but practically no political development, and, beyond that, a virtual freedom from interference for the various ethnic elements. The native is an agriculturist, the Italian a labourer and farmer, the Jew a trader, the Frenchman an administrator or capitalist,—that is the Tunisian division of functions; and economic solidarity along these lines is urged as the solvent of fanaticism and xenophobia. Thus, French policy had turned on its steps and is back to its earliest stage, save with a wider and clearer interpretation due to the pressure of economic forces, which are seen to be the link between Frenchman and Italian, Christian and Mohammedan, *citadin* and desert-dweller, Old Turban and Young Tunisian.

On the whole, Tunisia may be termed a French success, because the importance of the discontent since 1912 has to be tempered by a consideration of the world-wide Mohammedan unrest, and by a comparison of similar events, say, in India and Egypt. Over and above such a consideration, Tunisia clearly has far more association between natives and Europeans than Algeria, and there has been far less spoliation of the natives in general.<sup>62</sup> The present French difficulties, therefore, are not so much insoluble in themselves as based on the dislocation of that economic progress which was the greatest enemy of Tunisian unrest before 1912. When the unusual budgetary position and the decaying agriculture and the restricted commerce revert to normal, it is anti-

<sup>61</sup> *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1922, p. 315; *L'Afrique Française*, Dec. 1921, p. 429.

<sup>62</sup> But contrast M. al Asram et P. de Dianous, *Questions Tunisiennes* (1907), pp. 11, 18: “In Tunisia, it must be admitted, the rural native has been treated as rather a negligible quantity.”

pated that the native and Italian problems will largely decline, and, as Tunisia's riches are on stable agricultural and mineral foundations, and as the limit of development has by no means been reached, there is no natural obstacle to prevent this. The loan of 255 million francs in 1920 was a step towards the normal situation<sup>63</sup>; so too were campaigns for the industrialization of production. Tunisia, in its small way, is in a sound position,—far more so, indeed, than is Algeria; and, despite the severe nature of the crisis since 1918, it possesses every element necessary for its future progress. Moreover, since the *rapprochement* with the Italians and the concessions to the natives in 1922 have paved the way for the removal of the social cancers, the issue is becoming clarified of the complicating emotional factors, which have been so difficult a feature in the past. One scheme for the Bizerta port, or one public-works loan, is more significant than a score of *La Tunisie Martyre*, despite the uproar that accompanies such fulminations as the latter; and it is the more solid developmental aspect that France is stressing. The main fact in Tunisian history has been the *association* policy of Cambon and Alapetite. When that held, France was successful in the land and Tunisia was a shining example of French adaptability in the colonial sphere; and, now that that policy is being restored, the future may be judged from the past of the pre-war years.

<sup>63</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 30/7/20. Compare Flandin's speech in *L'Afrique Française*, March–April 1919, p. 110.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FRENCH WEST AFRICA

#### I. The Growth of the Colony

**A** GEOGRAPHICAL unity is given to the whole of West Africa from Mauretania to Nigeria by its common *hinterland*, centring round the Niger and Senegal basins and depending on the long sweep of coast. It is a flat country of river-basins and forests, the key to the whole being the dependence of the interior on the coastal outlets. The history of every part of West Africa, therefore, has been the story of the occupation of the coast and a gradual linking-up with the interior. This was especially the case with the French part, because, as it afterwards turned out, France obtained most of the interior but only a portion of the coast ; so that, with them, the relation of *hinterland* to coast assumed an importance even greater than elsewhere.

The French had been on the African coast for a long time, chiefly round the Senegal mouth. There, Dieppe merchants had gathered since the fourteenth century and there had been a permanent French colony since the end of the sixteenth century. But it was a lifeless settlement, especially after 1815, when it was one of the few fragments that were left to France. The rubber-trade languished, the slave-trade was turning elsewhere, and France, exasperated by the loss of her richer colonies, despised this African post. When Governor Faidherbe came in 1854, therefore, the colony consisted of a handful of trading-posts with a floating European population and some 17,000 natives. But Faidherbe changed all this and, with his delightfully simple policy of "Peace or Powder," really founded the colony of Senegal, and thus French West Africa, in its modern form.

He transformed a cordon of stagnant and isolated posts into a big territory, and added a *hinterland* to the coastal stations, in order to give the colony balance. To do this, he established relations with the chiefs, drove back the Moors and Toucouleurs, and cleared Senegal, keeping the peace thus established by his battalion of native *tirailleurs*. The land up to the right bank of the Senegal bend was organized and opened

to continuous trade. During the same years there was a spread along the coast, away beyond the English settlement at Sierra Leone to the Gold Coast and Dahomey. Isolated posts were set up between Grand Bassam and Porto Novo, and thus a footing obtained on the Ivory Coast and Dahomey colonies, because the new posts were not mere barter-places with a few coastal tribesmen but *points d'appui* for a logical and methodical expansion inland.<sup>1</sup>

By 1870, France thus had a compact block of organized territory in the Senegal, as far inland as Medina on the river, together with nuclear posts round the coast to Porto Novo. The next move was to spread inland round these nuclei, for otherwise the French would have only a precarious footing on the coast and no control of the interior trade. How rich this trade was was becoming evident, and how possible it was to tap it was first shown by the march of Magé (1861), who pushed to Segou and revealed the mystic Sudan, and then by Binger's expedition from the Niger to the Guinea coast.<sup>2</sup> France was going beyond the steamy mists of the river-mouths, unveiling the mystery of Timbuktu, and planning to connect all of the Niger lands with the coast. Magé and Binger, by operating from different points on the coast and in different directions, had shown that the isolated coastal-posts had a common *hinterland*, or, in other words, that West Africa had a unitary and unlimited economic future. The posts which had been contemptuously left to France as a kind of booby's prize in the international game were revealed as the threshold of a mighty economic empire; and the Sudan, Timbuktu, the Niger, all clad in a kind of mysterious uncertainty, entered the orbit of French politics, and appealed the more to the Latin temperament by their very romance and suggestion of things unknown. A field of commerce at a time when exploration was at its apex, an unlimited training-ground when Africa was beckoning to younger military leaders in France, and a huge emporium for trade and production at a moment when it was more than ever imperative that the colonies should pay,—all of these were offered by the African *hinterland*; and so France moved gaily to the task. This came about in the late eighties, when "France, for the first time, proceeded to a general definition of her African possessions" and attempted to convert the whole into one unity. Etienne, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, dreamed of a union between Dakar and Dahomey, and even, through Timbuktu the Mysterious, with Southern Algeria<sup>3</sup>; and he was supported by the newly

<sup>1</sup> See accompanying maps. The documents for this early stage are in Dubois et Terrier, "Un Siècle d'Expansion Coloniale" (1902), pp. 216, 330 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Binger, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée* (1892), map at end of Vol. II.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 2/12/91.

formed "Committee of French Africa" (1891)<sup>4</sup> and by the industrialists of the north who were needing the rubber and oil and other tropical products of West Africa.

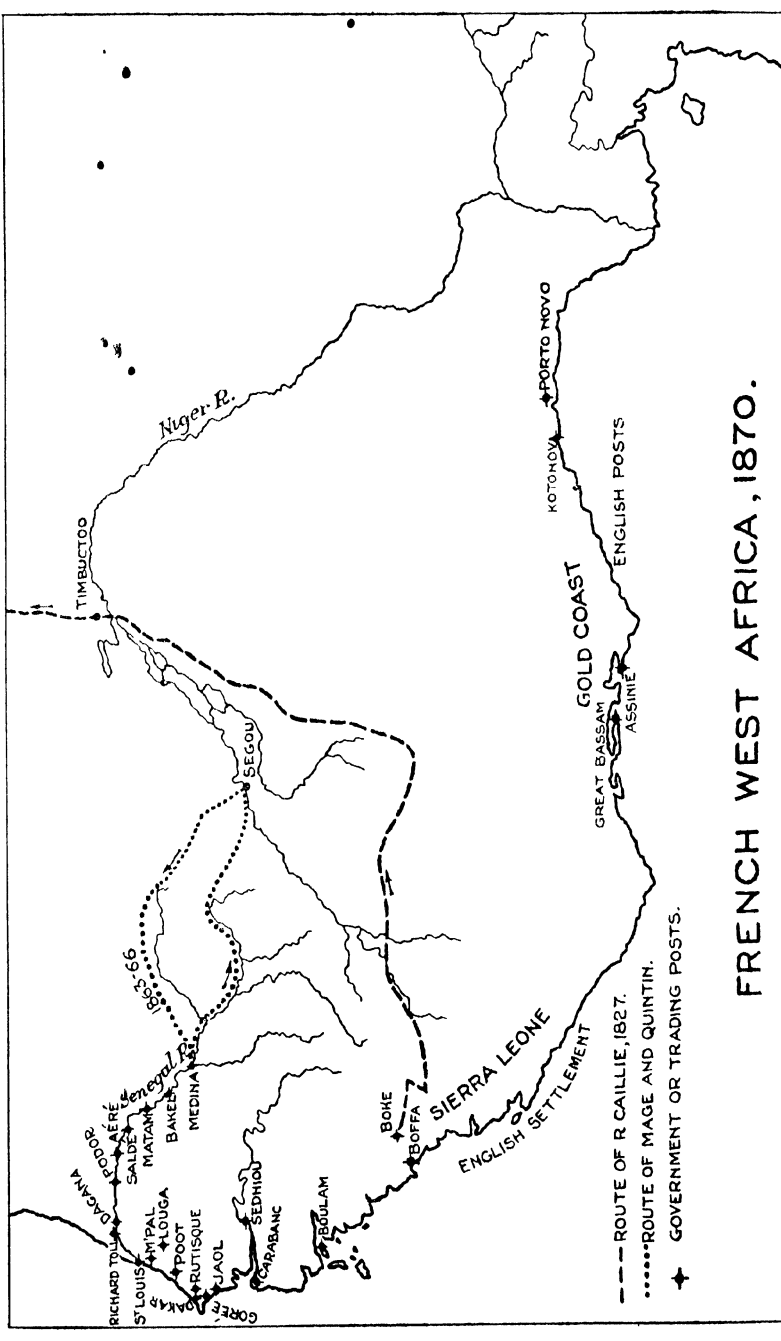
The stage was all set for the linking of the West African ports to a common *hinterland* of some 4½ million square kilometres, and step by step France went on. Faidherbe had brought her Medina and the right bank of the Senegal; then the move was from the Senegal to the Niger, for the Sudan led naturally to the better-peopled and richer Niger valley; and, once there (largely by the occupation of Bamako on the lower reaches in 1883), the whole course of the river beckoned. At the same time, as Binger's expeditions had demonstrated, feelers could be thrown out south, and the Ivory Coast and Dahomey linked on to the general forward-movement eastwards, and ever eastwards to Lake Chad. It must be admitted that the French colonial school was intoxicated by this dream in the nineties, especially when it came to envision a move even to the Nile and the Indian Ocean. It must be admitted, too, that Faidherbe's succinct despatch, "powder spoke," could have applied to most of this forward-movement, because it was in the main an imperialistic venture based on military conquest. Whatever economic motives there may have been in the beginning were soon thrust into the background and did not reappear until the conquest was effected.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, a military occupation of the land was inevitable. West Africa was divided amongst a few strong native confederacies, whose organization served both to hinder the French during the stage of conquest and to help them once the moment of consolidation was at hand. Various native kingdoms had arisen on the basis of the Songhai Empire of black Moslems, and for decades these determined the history of French efforts in West Africa. Thus, El Hadj-Omar had an empire between Timbuktu and the Guinea coast and unloosed the tribes between the two rivers in a terrible Holy War against the French.<sup>6</sup> On his fall, the more terrible Samory arose and consolidated the inland tribes, making himself the most difficult opponent France ever encountered in the colonial field. The conquest of the Omars and the Ahmadous and the Samorys made the occupation of West Africa far and away the most difficult colonial task of France. But there was the curious compensation that, to some extent, this pre-existing organization could be utilized,

<sup>4</sup> Through their monthly journal, *L'Afrique Française*, and its supplements *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1891 onwards.

<sup>5</sup> A full account of the campaigns is in P. Gaffarel, *Notre Expansion Coloniale en Afrique de 1870 à nos Jours* (1918), Chaps. 4-7.

<sup>6</sup> See his life in Le Chatelier, *L'Islam en Afrique Occidentale* (1899), or the account of his work in P. Cultru, *Histoire du Sénégal du XV<sup>me</sup> Siècle à 1870* (1910).



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for instance, when it came to reviving the economic life of the occupied areas. The organization of the prosperous Akkia kingdom was a ready-made structure which the French simply had to take over,—with its cotton-industries round Diene and Segou, its wools in Timbuktu and Gao, and its textiles as far afield as Kano and Sokoto. The conquerors simply had to maintain this vast system of inter-African trade and industry, and concentrate its external features on the French ports. There was a huge conglomerate economic world there, disorganized by the anarchy and the wars, it is true, but still ripe for the organizing, right across the Sudanese belt of territory.<sup>7</sup>

Early feelers had been sent out from the Upper Senegal as early as 1879, and then came the age of the missions, both economic investigations like Binger's and the more prevalent military patrol. The importance of the trade going out at Konakry and the realization of the wealth of the Guinea interior led to the occupation of the Guinea colony and a penetration to the holy city of Timbo in 1879. Then, with the Senegal and Guinea bases secured in the rear, the move up the Niger basin itself commenced in 1883, when Bamako was occupied. Eight years later Segou was reached, and a rapid move made through the rich multiculture province of Macina to Timbuktu and beyond (1893). A feeble footing on the Ivory Coast (1883) and a penetration of the narrow Dahomey *hinterland* (1890) rounded off the plan; and by 1900 France had control of a solid strip of the Sudan, comprising a prolongation of Senegal and Guinea inland to the Niger bend and with offshoots down through Dahomey and across to Lake Chad and thus the Congo. The Ivory Coast, because of its impenetrable forests and recalcitrant native tribes, was not yet linked up with the general scheme, but, with this exception, France had occupied a solid empire of three million square kilometres in less than twenty years.<sup>8</sup>

This was the most conspicuous triumph in French expansion, and the achievement was the greater because the economic mission, though subordinated to the military patrol, was never entirely neglected, and because the difficulties were so great.<sup>9</sup> An empire had been won, rich but only partly organized, and with its resources practically undeveloped. By 1900, having achieved the difficult task of conquest, the French were thus confronted by the far more difficult, because intangible and unspectacular, task of consolidation. The maintenance of the conquests of 1883–1901 depended on the spirit and nature of French organization,

<sup>7</sup> O. Meynier, *L'Afrique Noire* (1911), pp. 292–294.

<sup>8</sup> See Map 14 for progress, or Gaffarel (1918), *op. cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>9</sup> See lengthy reports of Brosselard, Binger, Faidherbe, Pavisse, and Madrolle Missions.

and the issue was still in doubt. It is a mistake to think that any final result had been achieved in 1900. The problem was just being posed, and only the preliminary obstacles, those due to the opposition of the native kingdoms, had been removed. As France soon perceived, the destruction was far the easier task. It was at the stage of rebuilding, when political and economic organization were just commencing, that the real difficulties emerged.

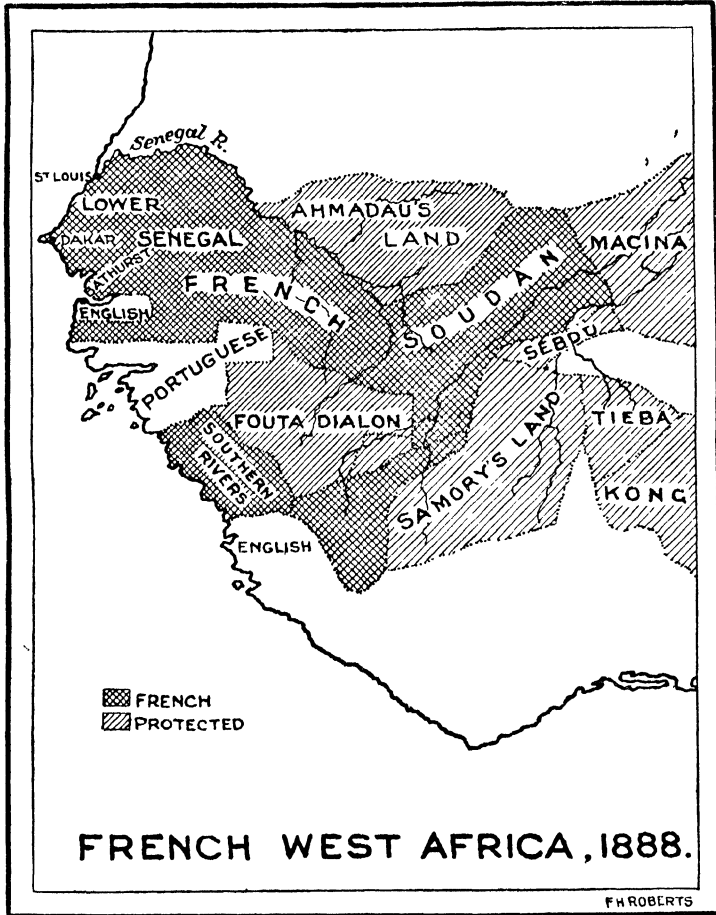
## II. The Organization of West Africa

The first and most obvious difficulty was that of control. In its final form, West Africa came to mean a territory of over  $4\frac{1}{2}$  million square kilometres and twelve million people,—that is, an area nine times the size of France itself; and conditions were such that European settlement was out of the question, and development had to be in native hands. But where was the problem to be tackled and what background was there for the reforms? It was realized that the success of any policy depended on its continuity, but how could this be obtained in a vast country, with practically no communications and with French effort split up between five or six separate governments? The one obvious fact at this stage was that West Africa was a single geographical and economic whole, and, as such, had to have its problems attacked by one directing agency. In other words, the necessary prelude to any organization or development was the establishment of a single government for all of West Africa. Without a federal administration there would be a series of disconnected local policies but in no sense a unified West African policy.

After the conquest, the first stress was therefore on achieving a federal organization. During the coastal stage the various colonies had naturally been quite distinct, because they were separated one from the other by foreign settlements and there was no land connection. There were thus four separate French colonies in West Africa, with Dahomey, by reason of its greater isolation, reckoned apart from the more westerly settlements. Each government was autonomous, and before 1895 there was not the slightest arrangement even for consultation between them. But the move to the *hinterland* had pushed certain common economic interests to the fore, and it was clear that the spoils could be better tapped by a division than by a mere duplicating competition. Moreover, the limitations imposed by Ahmadou in the north and Samory in the south showed that the problem could be attacked only as a whole, whether the local Governments so desired it or not. The move to the interior made co-ordination inevitable: hence came the first attempts at union in 1895.

The great difficulty in the way was the intense localist feeling, a feel-

ing which even as late as 1892 had found expression in a further splitting-up and the gift of financial autonomy to the Sudan. The four colonies (Senegal, Sudan, Guinea, and Ivory Coast) would in no whit diminish either their financial or administrative privileges; and so the first Governor-General, instituted in June, 1895, was a shadowy officer, aided



by a Superior Council, but only vaguely uniting the four colonies, each of which was left its full autonomy.<sup>10</sup> But the need of a more effective union was made imperious by the realization that the common *hinterland* had been so far tapped that land communications had become possible. By the end of the century, conquest had given place to commerce, and

<sup>10</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 16/6/95; François, *L'Afrique Occidentale Française* (1907), pp. 15-17.

concerted action was needed for the development of the resources thus given to France.

The limited and prudent beginning of 1895 was therefore replaced by a closer union. A decree of October, 1899, pointed the way in dividing the unwieldy Sudan amongst the other colonies, thus making the *hinterland* accessible by giving each coastal colony a direct sphere of influence in the previously undifferentiated interior. A meaningless mass of back-country was divided into four markets, each with an outlet. Political organization was thus harmonized with the needs of a systematic exploitation, and the very fact of splitting-up had emphasized the unity of the problem, for the disappearance of the Sudan removed the most obvious difficulty in the way of federation. Hereafter the problem, at least from an economic point of view, was a single one,—a fact which was further emphasized by the next step of running a railway from each of the coastal outlets up to the common centre, the Sudanese basin.

Yet political organization lingered, and, although a large degree of economic unity had emerged by the close of the century, the position was still incomplete. The Governor-General directly administered Senegal; but beyond a vague spokesmanship of the whole of West Africa, had no independent power in the other three states. It was realized, however, that federal schemes were not only desirable in theory but by this time actual problems of policy. The facts of the situation demanded a general government for the direction of economic and commercial exploitation.<sup>11</sup> This was the key-note of the situation: as Doumergue, the Minister of Colonies, said in introducing the reform of 1902, there was no obvious political reason for federation, because, politically, the local governments had succeeded: the reform was essentially an economic one, necessitated by the facts of geography and by the presence of riches which, even when tapped only on the outskirts, had led to a commercial movement of 160 million francs in 1901.

These views found expression in a decree of October 1, 1902, which set up a real Government-General, seated at Dakar, with an independent budget, and relieved from the responsibility of directly administering Senegal.<sup>12</sup> The Governor-General was no longer administrator of one province with a shadowy and deeply resented tutelage over the remainder, but a federal functionary over all and distinct from all. His position was finally defined by a decree of October 18, 1904, which removed the last local charges from his budget and made it exclusively one for federal purposes.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Dubois et Terrier (1902), *op. cit.*, p. 514.

<sup>12</sup> In *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1902, p. 151; compare Terrier in *L'Afrique Française*, Nov. 1902, p. 383. Roume's speech on the measure is on p. 433.

<sup>13</sup> In *L'Afrique Française*, Nov. 1904, p. 336. For Guy's speech on its relation to the Senegal, see p. 373.

Hereafter he alone was the mouthpiece of the colonies and the interpreter of French policy: he had control of customs and public works and economic development in general: he was the nerve-centre of the federation. West Africa, with a considerable amount of decentralization imposed by geographical conditions and local development, was still essentially one whole. After 1904, there were a Governor-General and five lieutenant-governors in the provinces, with a federal budget and six local ones. Each province had administrative and financial autonomy, but certain powers were reserved to the Dakar Government, and, in particular, a general power of budgetary supervision. Briefly, there is a division of functions, most political powers, save those of general control and policy, falling to the local colonies, most economic matters coming within the purview of the Government-General.<sup>14</sup> As time went on and local susceptibilities were diminished, emphasis came to be more and more on the central government, especially as regarded the determination of policy. Thus in 1903, a loan of 65 million francs was given for the economic development of the whole group, and naturally the appropriation of this by the general Government largely affected the future development of the various colonies; and similarly with the utilization of the new tariff which was imposed in 1908 for the construction of public works. The Government-General virtually decided the economic development of each of the component colonies, and here, rather than in its general co-ordinating function, was its real power. The reforms of 1902-1904 made possible the economic transformation of West Africa, and were on this account the most important event in the land's history. Without them, there would simply have been a continuance of the old unco-ordinated effort and conflicting policies. They made possible an economy and unity of effort, and, in so doing, made French West Africa.

With the passing of the years and the spread of influence further inland, this organization gradually extended. At the time of federation, there were only four provinces; by 1924, their number had swollen to eight, the new ones being French Sudan (1920), Upper Volta (1919), Mauretania (1921), and the Niger Colony (1922), each of which came to have the full economic and political privileges of the original coastal-colonies. This gradual splitting-off was perhaps the best justification of the federal *régime*, which was shown to be elastic and capable of adaptation to changing circumstances, especially as the economic centre of gravity moved inland from the coast to the Niger valley. Federation has intensified both the local and the general development of West Africa,

<sup>14</sup> See Roume's important circular of 24/1/05, in full in François (1907), *op. cit.*, pp. 47-69.

thus affording a striking contrast to the stagnant localism of the earlier years.

### III. Native Policy

Federation was one preparation for the development of West Africa : another was the stock-taking from a native point of view. France had to know how much labour was available, and what kind of labour it was, for this would to no small degree determine the extent and direction of development, as Roume saw when he was elaborating his railway-schemes in the early years of this century. Events favoured her in this regard, however, because the character of the natives, after the initial conquest, imposed no such insuperable obstacles on development as in Algeria. West Africa did not know a serious or prolonged native crisis of the Algerian kind and consequently was equally ignorant of the thwarted endeavours and futile policies which were so detrimental to Algerian development.

The first fact that France realized, after the smashing of Ahmadou and Samory, was that, far from being densely peopled, " West Africa was a country without negroes." It was soon seen that her dreams of an inexhaustible reservoir of men could not come to pass, and that she was confronted by a shortage so obvious and acute that it was dubious if even the ordinary demands of economic development could be met. Even after the improvements brought about by peace and reform, the Census of 1921 showed the position clearly.

	Area (Square Kilometres).	Natives.		Foreigners.	Density (per Square Kilo- metre).
		Citizens.	Subjects.		
Senegal . . .	192,000	22,771	1,187,830	9,635	6.4
Mauretania . .	400,000	116	261,381	335	.6
Guinea . . .	231,702	489	1,869,322	4,748	8.0
Ivory Coast . .	315,000	308	1,541,788	2,749	4.9
Dahomey . . .	107,000	121	839,832	1,646	7.8
Sudan . . .	923,000	1,164	2,472,370	72	2.6
Upper Volta . .	300,000	17	2,972,918	316	9.9
Niger Colony. .	1,200,000	9	1,083,504	314	.9
	3,668,702	24,995	12,228,945	19,815	(av.) 5.1

That is, only in Guinea and the Upper Volta is the population adequate for the needs of development, although it must be remembered that, in some of the larger colonies, the above table, by taking into account the huge desert-areas, makes the position worse than it actually is. Despite this, the labour-shortage has always been, and remains, the basic problem in West Africa.<sup>15</sup>

On the whole, the natives are of an adaptable type. Of course, in a region of more than 3½ million square kilometres, there are considerable differences, although practically all are knit by a common agricultural life and a common loose Mohammedanism. This is especially the case in the Senegal and Sudan, where the future of the colony so obviously lies. There, all of the natives, save the trading Ouloufs, are farmers, two groups in particular being the hope of West Africa. With the one of these, the Bambara, who cover much of the Western Sudan, and especially the region which France has chosen as the centre of her *mise en valeur* experiment, the agricultural caste is as esteemed as the warrior, and they provide the best materials for France in her developmental schemes.<sup>16</sup> More widely spread, the second race, the Peuhls, cover an immense area from Timbuktu to the Guinea coast, and are the pastoralists *par excellence*. Elsewhere, the native characteristics are not so marked, and, in the southern colonies in particular, orderly agriculture, with the notable exception of the cotton-cultivation of Central Dahomey, tends to give way to a more or less precarious forest-life. These men of the forest and the nomad Moors of the Saharan steppes offer little for the purposes of development, and it is to the Sudanese and to the gradual infiltration of new ideas to the interior, when up-country natives are attracted to the coastal factories, that France had to look.<sup>17</sup>

Despite this difference in potentialities, the basic problem is everywhere the same. The natives, Bambaras or desert Moors alike, have had their old life broken by the shock of European contact; the old order of tribal society, with its cohesion based on the unquestioned rule of custom, has been forced into the background; and the native, deracialized by the shattering of everything which has previously guided him, drifts disillusioned and despairing, now knowing no hope, and now, with the insane joy of the iconoclast, aiding the outside forces in rending his life from top to bottom. The past that is gone cannot be retrieved, the forces of economic modernization alone making that out of the question,—apart from the impossibility of retracing one's steps in a polity in which everything depended on the sway of custom. Yet the future is not clear, because the native, here a French citizen and there a mere

<sup>15</sup> *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1922, p. 59.

<sup>16</sup> J. Henry, *Les Bambara* (1910), pp. 1-11.

<sup>17</sup> G. Déherme, *L'Afrique Occidentale Française* (1908), p. 277 *et seq.*

“subject,” does not know where he can fit in. Seeing neither a place for himself nor hope for his children, he drifts in a reckless despair or gives way to a care-free insouciance, both of which harm himself—and the French reformer. Or too often they find expression for their thwarted desires and the general futility of existence in their changing world (the worse because for centuries the only world they knew was one in which there was no change) in a careless abandonment to the call of militant Islam.<sup>18</sup> That is the force in the background, the incalculable factor always there, the uncertain element that may be either only a vague backing to native problems or the crucible in which everything native is thrust into ferment. Islam becomes the more real in West Africa in proportion to the growth of the disillusioned psychology outlined above: it provides an apt outlet for the repression engendered by that psychology, and thus is always, potentially at least, a grave aspect of the native problem.

This is the more so, because of its peculiar local characteristics in West Africa. Wherever Mohammedanism is found in negro countries, it is of a different nature from the fiery religious faith of North Africa and the East: it is rather a political yeast ready to flow over and give buoyancy and expression to latent discontents. That is, it liberates and provides a common rallying-ground for the isolated feelings of repressed instincts held by the natives. By the force of contagion, therefore, aided by the natural group-instincts of the negro, it transmutes the pessimistic thwarted feeling into a political movement, based on an emotional *furor* and made unquestionable by vague and dimly understood religious grounds. The West Africans are not susceptible to religious calls in themselves, but, since this peculiar interpretation of Mohammedanism enables it to fill a gap in their lives, they readily listen to prophets who preach discontent and non-co-operation, and, because of the political issue involved, and the psychological stimulus entailed, graft the precepts of Islam on to their original primitive mysticism.<sup>19</sup> That is the real nature of Islamism in West Africa, and that is why it is more than a religion (precisely because in itself it is less than a religion) in effecting the development of the country. Islam in North Africa means distinct political, economic, and social problems, but, after all, the problems are clear-cut; whereas in West Africa, their vagueness and intangibility make them more difficult, because Mohammedanism there is rather psychological and political than religious.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> For position, see P.-J. André, *L'Islam Noir* (1924), p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Arnaud on “Psychology of the Moslem Black,” in *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1912, p. 125. Compare *L'Afrique Française*, June 1922, p. 278 *et seq.*

<sup>20</sup> A. Quellien, *La Politique Musulmane dans l'Afrique Occidentale Française*, of J. Brevié, *Islamisme contre naturisme au Soudan Français* (1923), pp. 143, 231 *et seq.* The whole of Part III is excellent.

This is the more noticeable as the front of Islam advances south towards Central Africa, and explains such movements as those of the prophet Harris in the Ivory Coast in 1914 and Kabongo in the Congo. The eclecticism and accommodating toleration of the West African native explain the peculiar nature of Mohammedanism there, and, despite the official French policy of neither aiding nor attacking Islam in these regions,<sup>21</sup> make a constant vigilance and supervision necessary; and from that to intervention is but a shadowy change. Certain aspects of Islam easily fit on to the bases of native society (the economic concept of the family, polygamy, slavery, a fighting simplicity), and, because its aggressiveness affords an outlet for their disillusionment, they accept the religion because of the expression it gives them, and are untroubled by its dogma.<sup>22</sup> The outside religion is therefore always a complicating feature of the native problem, and is liable at any moment to become the dominant *motif*. Hence the force of Pan-Islamism; hence the frequent repercussions of outside disturbances on West Africa; hence the increasing number of politico-religious associations, even with the prosperous coast-dwellers; hence the strikes of black workers,—not in themselves serious yet a distinctly new feature; and hence the general ripple of antagonism, or at least of divided interests which, even in a negative or potential form, could always be traced in West Africa.<sup>23</sup>

The presence of this factor, probably by reason of its uncertainty more than anything else, has always directly affected French policy, and has led to a greater restraint and tolerance than in North Africa. Even now, France has only 7,700 Frenchmen to a native population of almost 13 millions, so that any policy ruthlessly and deliberately shattering native organizations, as in Algeria and Cochin-China and the Pacific, was out of the question. An aggressive policy of enforced and rapid change was neither advisable nor practicable; and so France progressed by a policy of non-intervention.

It is true that, during one of the triumphs of philosophical humanitarianism, the much-discussed experiment of naturalization was introduced to the Senegal, but this never became general and always remained an obstacle in the way of a sensible native policy. Senegalese citizenship dates back to the liberalism of 1830, but was limited to the four communes then effectively occupied. When the colony expanded at a later date, the policy, clearly opposed to French ideas as it was, could

<sup>21</sup> Faidherbe and his immediate successors made the mistake of directly fostering Mohammedanism, but the error of this policy was perceived in Ponty's time (1908-1915). Cp. Brevié (1923), p. 257 *et seq.*

<sup>22</sup> L. Sonolet, *L'Afrique Occidentale Française* (1912), pp. 227-228.

<sup>23</sup> Arnaud, "L'Islame et la politique musulmane française en Afrique Occidentale," in *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1912, pp. 3, 113, 142 *et seq.*

not be extended, the result being that the natives of the four privileged communes became an isolated *enclave* in the midst of other natives disgruntled because, though alike in every way, they were not similarly favoured. They are, in short, an anomaly, and a decidedly troublesome anomaly, exercising, with the similarly privileged natives of the Old Colonies and the towns in India, a disruptive influence on general colonial questions far out of proportion to their real importance.

This was especially the case after an amazing incident in 1916, when, without examination or discussion, the French Parliament passed a law declaring these privileged natives full French citizens.<sup>24</sup> The idea was to give them some compensation for conscription and to remove the subtle distinction that had been worked out between the status of an elector (as were the Senegalese of the four communes) and a French citizen. But this outright declaration had consequences of which neither the thirty colonial specialists nor the forty jurists who were responsible for the law had any conception. This short declaration, in effect, did for a few Senegalese Moslems what had always been denied to the Algerian Moslems. It made them super-citizens, more favoured than the Frenchmen of France, because, in addition to their French rights, they were enabled to retain all the peculiar Moslem privileges regarding a *statut personnel*—polygamy, succession, and similar matters where there was a difference between French law and the Koran. That is, at a single step, the whole of French policy towards Islam—the gravest problem in the French colonial Empire—was reversed. The 25,000 West African negroes who were citizens upset the whole Empire, and friction continued until a law of 1922, a short law of six lines explained by 82 pages of introduction, reverted to the former position and, as elsewhere, made the renunciation of the Moslem *statut personnel*, the most prized possession of a Moslem, the necessary preliminary to naturalization.<sup>25</sup>

France has thus paid dearly for her original mistake of 1830 about these natives, both in West Africa and elsewhere, for the presence of this enfranchised minority serves to emphasize the gap between their privileges and the narrow scope offered to the others by French policy. It is idle to speak of slow and progressive change in a community part of whose members have for a century exercised the entire rights of Frenchmen, although these particular natives were not one whit more progressive or educated than their neighbours. The Senegalese communes are the only places in the French colonial Empire where citizenship is determined by a purely geographical consideration, the result being that there is a continual migration of expectant mothers to have their babies born

<sup>24</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 14, 23/7/16; Senate, 27, 30/9/16.

<sup>25</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., docts. parl., 1922, No. 4231 (Valude's explanation).

in the favoured communes. This relic of the old ideas of assimilation, especially since the whole issue was given a world-wide publicity by the *faux pas* of 1916, is a grave anomaly and has always menaced the success of native policy, both in West Africa and beyond.<sup>26</sup> The presence of this assertive minority colours the rest of French policy with a hue of charlatanry and insincerity: hence the feeling of almost cynical unrest on the part of the outside natives, and a ready turn to the seductive murmurs of the Mohammedan marabouts.

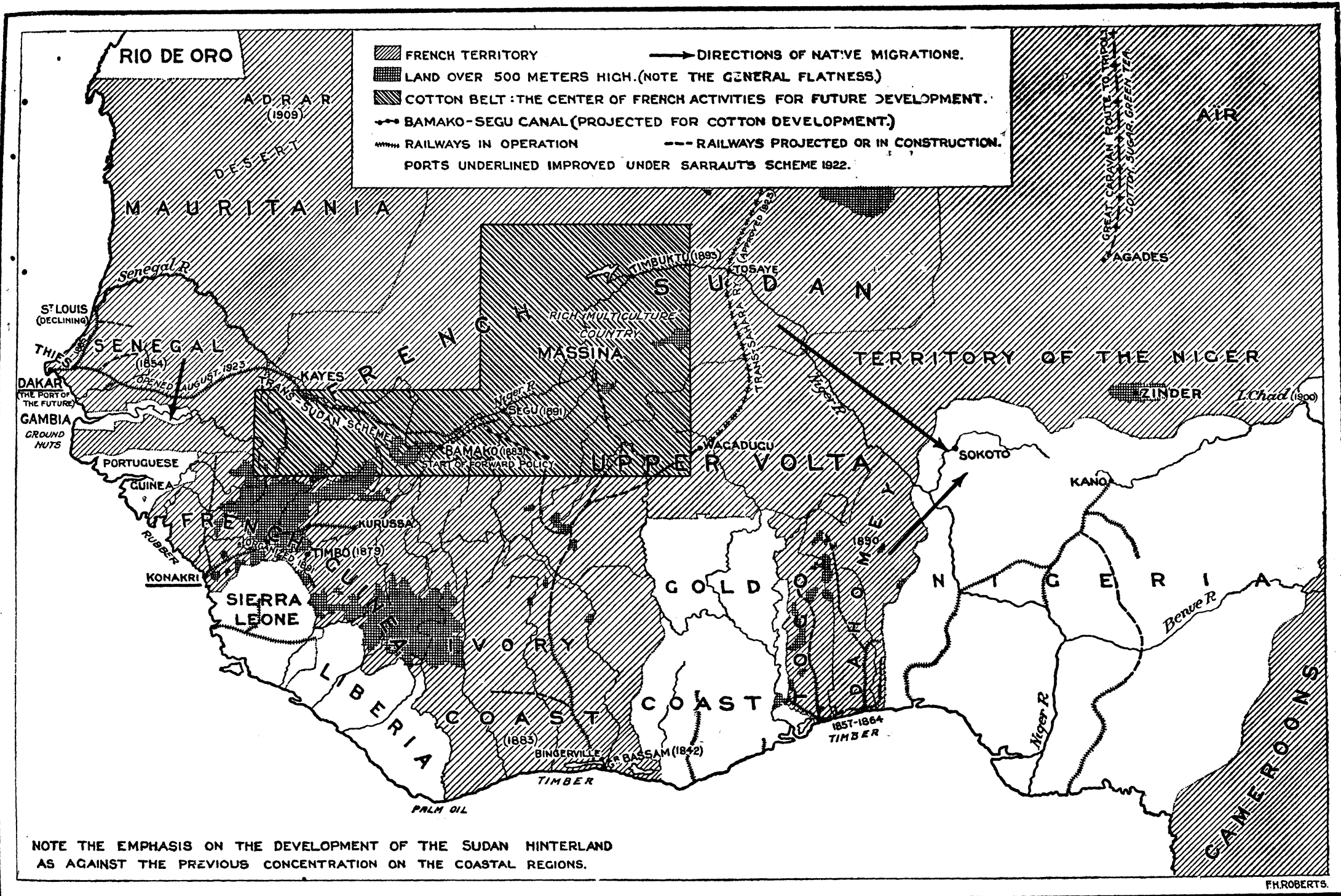
Outside of this glaringly anomalous patch, French policy in West Africa has consistently been based on the protectorate idea of Tunisia.<sup>27</sup> The ideas of Cambon and Paul Bert found a full and successful application here, even with the more backward populations. The native authorities have been maintained, and, even where the absence of any adaptability on their part made a change inevitable, others were set up in their place. The natives govern themselves under French supervision, and this has done much to minimize the disruptive features of the changes in their moods of existence, especially because with the utilization of native officials went a large degree of toleration for native customs, even those directly opposed to European concepts. For instance, there was the matter of slavery, which under the peculiar conditions of family economy in West Africa, was one of the bases on which society rested. It was abolished root-and-branch in February, 1901, but the abolition led to all manner of unlooked-for social and economic results. The changes involved did more to hasten the disintegration of native society than a score of previous policies: the tribes therefore protested, the Markas even rose in arms against the new decree; and the administration perceived that, in the given stage of native society, and with the complicated interactions between the various phases of native life, such a radical change, humanitarian though it was in theory, was not desirable in practice, or even practicable. The domestic slave was not so much an oppressed person as "an integral part of the West African family, society, and land-system," and not really badly-off. Since the failure of its reform of 1901, therefore, the Government, while preventing the slave-trade, has been forced to tolerate domestic slavery.<sup>28</sup>

France thus realized that, while she could guide and direct, she could not unduly force native policy, and that the axiom, *quieta non movere*, had a distinct economic and social significance in a society based on a largely immobile rule of custom. Native organizations are therefore

<sup>26</sup> Article in Daresté, *Recueil Colonial*, Sept.-Oct. 1916 ("Les Nouveaux Citoyens Français"), or *L'Afrique Française*, June 1922, p. 306.

<sup>27</sup> L. Vignon, *Un Programme de Politique Coloniale* (1919), p. 300 et seq., or Ponty's circular in *L'Afrique Française*, October 1909, p. 348.

<sup>28</sup> Déherme (1908), *op. cit.*, p. 359 et seq.—an important analysis.



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kept, and so are the ideas beyond those organizations. Thus, in civil justice, there is a choice between French and native forms, and, in the village and subdivisional courts at least, everything is under native control and ideas,<sup>29</sup>—a desirable feature in a polity where local customs count for so much, and where the native cannot understand the intricacy of the European code, or the meaning of appeal and conflicting judgments, or the significance of the protracted procedure, or pardons under the Berenger law of reprehensive, and where gaol is a delight!

But France does not go too far in this turn to native organizations, and invariably imposes rigid limits beyond which the natives cannot pass. The chiefs of villages and cantons, it is true, have a practical right of self-government, but there is not as large a degree of native co-operation as in Nigeria and Sierra Leone, at least in so far as the higher posts are concerned. "To let them reach the higher grades," said a standard French work on West Africa in 1912, "would be as dangerous for our influence as for the execution of the work,"<sup>30</sup> and this represented the prevailing French opinion. Outside of the privileged communes and purely local matters, West Africa was either directly administered in *cercles* or controlled through the intermediary of supervised native chiefs, who, as it were, enabled the influence of the few French officials to be diluted and spread over a wider area.

Since the war, however, the growing sophistication of the natives and the French desire to enable them to take a greater share in the economic development of the country have joined to bring about a wider degree of native co-operation.<sup>31</sup> In the Upper Volta colony for instance, within the great bend of the Niger, there are already eleven councils of native commandants and notables. Their scope may be gauged from a list of the matters discussed at one meeting of the council of Dédougou on the Black Volta, at the close of 1922; the list comprised such matters as the native head-tax, new crops, aviation centres, telegraph-lines, stock-pests, transhumance, the condition of native women, the policy towards foreigners, the *état civil* of the native, and the like.<sup>32</sup> Here we have the basis for a considerable degree of provincial self-government, and indeed, it is almost a truism in West Africa that such local autonomy develops *pari passu* with economic advance, Dédougou, for instance, being in that Sudanese cotton-belt on which most of French effort has been concentrating for some time. To secure economic co-operation

<sup>29</sup> *Journal Officiel*, 7/12/24, for latest organization. For development, see *Journal Officiel*, 24/11/03, 22/8/12.

<sup>30</sup> Sonolet (1912), *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>31</sup> J. Delafosse in *Dépêche Coloniale*, April 1918.

<sup>32</sup> *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1923, pp. 439-442.

under the conditions of West African peasant-proprietorship, the natives must have an independence of outlook and judgment which self-government can best produce; hence the motive of the more liberal policy of the French in recent years.

The native policy pursued in West Africa has always been successful, even if somewhat limited in its scope. Faced with the vague menace of Islam, France has had to proceed carefully, and, save with the enfranchised Senegalese, has risked nothing on ill-advised experiments. The bases of her policy have been a gradually increasing co-operation with the natives and a minimum of change in native organizations; and the result has been, if not a complete *rapprochement* with the natives, at least an absence of serious disturbances, an absence the more striking in view of the protracted opposition to the French conquest thirty years ago. The management of the natives, especially over so wide an area and in view of such complicating factors, has been the greatest success of the French in this colony, and the basis on which the various schemes of economic development since 1914 have been erected. This is the more important because the impossibility of French settlement and the difficulty of introducing outside supplies of labour made everything depend on native co-operation.

#### IV. Economic Development

Having solved the native problem, the French could turn to the details of economic development; and it was Governor-General Roume's claim (1902-1908) to have placed native policy on the sound foundations outlined above, and then to have built up an economic programme on these bases.

The economic history of the land was determined by the presence of 13 million natives in a vast territory which was rich only in parts, and where the limited forests and agricultural lands faded into the great interior desert. Development in such a tropical country had of necessity to be in native hands, and the only choice was whether there should be European *entrepreneurs* using the natives as tenants, or whether the requisite capital should be afforded by the Government and the natives develop along the lines of a sturdy yeomanry,—a progressive peasant-proprietorship? Inclination and necessity combined to favour the second of these alternatives, to the development of which the whole of West African policy, even education and land-settlement, has been directed. The policy is to develop the land by and for the native himself, since France deems that this is to her interest as well as his, as the lesson of the French Congo and the early policies in Indo-China demonstrated by

their failure. France turned to the peasant-farming idea of British West Africa, and made her economic policy conform to this goal.

The difference between the land-policies of West Africa and, say, of Algeria clearly shows this difference of direction. In West Africa the influence was on conservation rather than change, and on maintaining the land in native hands rather than providing facilities for European settlement. The decree of October, 1904,<sup>33</sup> which consolidated the land-laws, while it vested all vacant lands in the State, established the principle that native lands could not be alienated without the consent of the lieutenant-governor of the province concerned. Similarly with the decree of July 1906,<sup>34</sup> which allowed the natives to immatriculate or register their lands on the Torrens system. Some degree of individualization had to come, it was clear, because how otherwise could mortgages and credit-facilities in general be extended to the owners of group-property? But even here the French preferred to advance slowly and, rather than duplicate the experience of Algeria where one native could dispossess his fellow-proprietors and where facilities for individualization had too often opened a loophole for abuse, they limited the ease of converting group into individual property.

Faidherbe in 1865 had seen that cultivation opened the way for individualization and had even declared that the cultivated land should be deemed the property of the individual cultivator, but this was a step in the wrong direction. Forced modernization from a European point of view was illogical, so that, after a more or less undecided policy for thirty years, it was declared that the emphasis was to be on "customs and local usages,"—that is, on the native point of view in regulating land ownership and transfer as against the French codes which the early Senegalese legislation had tried to introduce. Land-policy was to be determined by native conditions and native needs, as the realities of the actual position were more important than the details of the *Code Civile*.

The decree of July 24, 1906, therefore, while it introduced the Torrens System of registration to all of West Africa, laid a primary stress on the prevention of abuse. Such facilities were given as would aid the development of a *régime* of peasant-proprietors, but there was no compulsory change. Illogicalities, contradictions even, in their land code were not as important as the consideration that the system, traditional and understood and trusted by the people concerned, should foster native production. That was the goal, the methods were secondary; and the French had seen enough of the breakdown of assimilation in Algeria

<sup>33</sup> In *Journal Officiel*, 26/10/04.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 4/8/06. Cp. François (1907), *op. cit.*, p. 203.

and the Old Colonies and in the first decades of Indo-China to want to introduce it in West Africa.

Educational methods were equally determined by the needs of the peasant-proprietors, although here the gain has been in tendencies rather than in actual results. Up to 1903 there was no professional education in a population essentially mechanical and no agricultural education in a country that is almost entirely agricultural. The only education at all was in a few religious and State schools that tended to turn out a de-racialized and useless product, and which did not serve to counteract the dangerous propaganda instilled in the marabouts' schools. Governor Camille Guy had exposed the ineffectiveness of this method of procedure and showed the folly of a purely literary education in a land of peasant-farmers. One of the most trenchant passages in a famous report he issued on native education ran :—

“A young Senegalese who knew all about the towns situated on the Loire and the principal events of the Hundred Years' War could not tell the principal stages of the Senegal River or give any indication of the actual institutions of France. Everywhere, there was a verbal and conventional education and a constant appeal to mechanical memory, and nowhere was there an education adapted to the needs of West Africa and of the populations who received it.”

Guy found the natives reading and writing French, mostly without understanding it, and wasting their time on useless work.<sup>35</sup>

A decree of November, 1903, was therefore passed to reverse this position and to change both the methods and the aims of native education. The predominantly religious control now gave way, and a programme of State-schools outlined on the basis set up by Faidherbe and Galliéni. Henceforth there were to be village and urban and regional schools, all in one connected structure and having as their *raison d'être* the turning-out of a native useful in the conditions of life as he found them. The mechanically gifted natives near the centres of population were to receive a craft-education ; townsmen were to become practical trade assistants in commercial houses : and the great mass of the people, the sons of rural agriculturists, were to be taught to follow in their fathers' footsteps, but with that extra equipment that would make the son a more progressive farmer in the father's environment. Education after 1903 was to be entirely dominated by the criteria of utility. It was to be a system proportioned to the needs of rural West Africa and to an environment in which small-scale farming was to be the mode of life for generations.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Guy's report is in François (1907), *op. cit.*, p. 164.

<sup>36</sup> G. Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale : l'Enseignement en Afrique Occidentale Française* (1917), p. 4 *et seq.*

The aim was thus clearly defined, but vocational education lagged as much in practice as it was approved in theory, and 98 per cent. of the natives are still uneducated. The objective remains as clearly held as ever and is reasserted in the reforms of 1925; it is only the means that have been lacking, especially in the period of economies necessitated by the war and the post-war crisis.<sup>37</sup>

Policy in most directions has thus been adapted to the general need of developing West Africa along the lines of tropical agriculture in native hands. Native policy, land-laws, labour restrictions, education, and Government-aid all fit in together in aiding this trend, which received a great fillip by the success of native cotton and cocoa-production in the various foreign colonies along the West African coast.<sup>38</sup>

Ever since the conquest, the policy has been to aid a distinct specialization within each local area in order to strengthen the output of the federation as a whole. Following the usual method of French colonization, the parts were subordinated to the machine; hence the various colonies tended to become "monoculture" countries, producing a single crop, as with the ubiquitous groundnuts in the Senegal. It was practically only in the vast Sudanese *hinterland*, where the potentialities in themselves were far greater, that the older "multiculture" idea was retained. Elsewhere, it was in the main a *régime* of specialization; and corresponding to the groundnuts of the Senegal were the cocoa of Guinea, the timber of the Ivory Coast, and the oil of Dahomey. Of course, geography determined this even more than inclination, but, even so, it was a realization of this kind that was so important in helping to bring about union and in shaping French policy in practically every field. The result has been that French West Africa, at least since federation, has proceeded more according to a preconceived policy than in the other French colonies. The French here knew what they wanted and had a plan,<sup>39</sup> and this explains why the history of the colony has resembled the erection of an edifice rather than the haphazard *tracasseries* and frequent changes of method that so typified policy, say, in Indo-China and Algeria.

Given this point of view, the economic future of West Africa narrowed down to two considerations,—what products the natural conditions would allow, and which of them could be produced on a paying basis in such a country of great distances and limited public-works and scanty labour? Up till recent years, rubber attracted most attention,—indeed, more so than the position ever warranted, for the French were obsessed with the

<sup>37</sup> Eandace in *Journal Officiel*, 30/6/20.

<sup>38</sup> *Renseignements Coloniaux*, Dec. 1905, p. 484; 1923, p. 434.

<sup>39</sup> Retained to date. See Merlin's speech in *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1922, p. 47.

idea of making West Africa a second Belgian Congo. The desire to drain wealth from the country in such a rapid manner led to an unwise native exploitation and a neglect of re-afforestation projects. The result was that production declined and, once the wild-rubber of the forest was no longer available, competition with the plantations of the Orient was out of the question. The cheaper methods and more abundant labour of Indo-Malaya closed the door on West African development in this direction. Hence a decline, both in quantity and value, set in from about 1904. The 5,170 tons exported in 1904 dwindled to 3,080 in 1915, and thus the Sudan-Guinea region lost its richest staple and its greatest hope for the future.

Far from meaning stagnation, this setback served only to draw attention to the fact that, in a world in which tropical raw-materials were coming more and more into demand, oleaginous products were a far better proposition. It was in this direction that West Africa concentrated, until the cotton boom of the post-war years. The Senegal in particular flourished with its groundnuts, of which 166,000 tons were exported in 1913. This single product, while making the colony's history monotonously uneventful, at least secured prosperity: and it is argued that, given the necessary roads and an adequate training in dry-farming methods, it could equally transform the Upper Sudan and Middle Niger, in both of which the conditions resemble those of Senegal. French activity has therefore largely crystallized in this direction in recent years, the more so because the French market still absorbs more than twice as many groundnuts as her colonies can afford.<sup>40</sup> This is the staple of the northern half of West Africa: in the south, especially in the Ivory Coast and Dahomey, its place is taken by palm-oil, which allows a similarly well-grounded economic development in these regions. Before 1914, Europe imported 300,000 tons of nuts and 200,000 tons of oil, and about a tenth of these came from the French colonies. Here, again, there was a scope for almost unlimited expansion; but here, too, Malay competition was felt. West Africa could not advance without more modern methods of cultivation and crushing,—and these were practically unobtainable without supplies of outside capital and unless the entire industry was taken out of native hands.<sup>41</sup> The colony was feeling the defects of its dependence on the backward natives, and, as in the case of rubber, had to stand by and see its trade in palm-oil practically stagnant because of the rise of industrialized methods elsewhere. The conflict between these methods and the rudimentary family-methods of West Africa was the fundamental problem that was posing itself in the

<sup>40</sup> Report of Roux at *Congrès d'Agriculture Coloniale Française*, 1918.

<sup>41</sup> Cosnier Report (H. Cosnier, *L'Ouest Afrique Française*), 1921, p. 124 *et seq.*

decade before 1914, and on the answer the whole of the country's future depended.

Practically half of West Africa's exports are of oily materials, but of recent years other economic stand-bys have emerged.<sup>42</sup> The forests in the southern colonies, especially in the Ivory Coast, attracted attention at an early date, because this single province has far larger timber-resources than the whole of France. Almost half of its exports are of mahogany, and the limit of exploitation is nowhere within sight.<sup>43</sup> With timber, cocoa has also attracted attention in the same province of the Ivory Coast, especially after the transformation of the neighbouring English colonies with this product in the last twenty-five years. The crop has proved the most favourable under conditions of peasant-proprietorship and is virtually a new industry. From 1904 to 1908 the Ivory Coast produced only four tons a year; by 1923 this had increased to 3,600 tons, although cocoa was still secondary to timber and palm-oil. But despite the progress, the French record in this direction is not to be compared with the native production in the Gold Coast.

Since 1903, however, it has been cotton that has attracted far more attention than either of the above crops. Indeed, cotton possibilities have been the fact most emphasized in the colony's history, even if achievement in other directions has been far greater. It is France's dream to make herself independent of foreign cotton, because she imports more than a quarter of a million tons of raw cotton a year and employs 250,000 workers in the cotton-industry. Dependence on the foreigner for such an important primary commodity is naturally an ever-present menace to the country's economic security. It is for this reason that the cotton campaign has been more consistently pursued in the last twenty years than any other issue in French colonial policy; and this explains what seems to outsiders the inordinate stress on cotton in French colonies, the more so because it has implied a neglect of far richer and better implanted crops. As it was, however, Oceania, Indo-China, Madagascar and West Africa were all submitted to this urge, the last-mentioned in particular, because the best of the available fields is in the French Sudan, — "a potential Egypt," that huge swamp-region between Timbuktu and Bamako.

But the mountain of effort and, one might say, the continent of emphasis, have resulted in the tiniest mouse of achievement.<sup>44</sup> The

<sup>42</sup> See survey in François, *L'Afrique Occidentale Française* (1920), p. 7 *et seq.*

<sup>43</sup> Bertin's report, *Mission Forestière Coloniale*, 1918-1919, especially Vol. I, is monumental.

<sup>44</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Dec., 1923, p. 633.

earliest attempts at cotton-culture were in 1903, and the natives first produced American cotton three years later. But, despite the fillip given to production by the war, the average quantity produced between 1918 and 1922 was only 570 tons for the whole of West Africa. The only real achievement was that the twenty years of effort resulted in a clear understanding of what conditions were necessary, and it might reasonably be asserted that there is an obvious disparity between this gain and the expenditure involved. The reasons for the lack of results were many, and not always peculiar to the French possessions. The directing body, the "Colonial Cotton Association," which had been formed in 1903 to foster native production of American cotton in Africa,<sup>45</sup> secured only mediocre results in British and German territories as well as French. The natives for the most part stood aloof, because ground-nuts and cocoa paid far better than cotton, and what were the dictates of national policy to them? Even those who adopted the culture were little adaptable, because they were still in the spade-stage of cultivation and even the wooden plough was beyond them. A little millet and vegetables sufficient for their personal needs were all they wanted, and they had always been too oppressed and too much imbued with the psychology of "the under-dog" to fight for advance. Lacking incentives, they stood still. Then, again, there was a struggle between the local and the American varieties of cotton, and it was not until the failures of 1904-1911 revealed the unsuitability of the exotic varieties and the impossibility of haphazard development that even the aim was clearly evident.

Since 1914, to the contrary, the objective has been well-defined. As Governor-General Roume said, the plan must be "to produce American cotton by the native," although, of recent years, more emphasis has been placed on the European producer and director. Unsupervised native production has been ruled out, and the Government has assumed the functions of a vast *entrepreneur*. Moreover, the activities of the "French Cotton Association" have been more noticeable since 1914, and the problem was reduced to two essentials,—irrigation and communications,—both of which are necessary forerunners to any cotton-production on a large scale.<sup>46</sup>

The only way of producing cotton in West Africa is by irrigating the Senegal and Niger valleys. The latter in particular affords the desired conditions and has no less than two million hectares of river-flats available for purposes of irrigation. Various missions, notably the Béline Mission of 1921, were sent out to make the preliminary investiga-

<sup>45</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, 1903, pp. 50, 343.

<sup>46</sup> François (1920), *op. cit.*, pp. 22-29: see Map No. between pp. 320 and 321.

tions, and a proposition to irrigate 750,000 hectares by a canal at Segou sanctioned.<sup>47</sup> But this is only one phase of the situation, and, even given the necessary training of the natives and irrigation-facilities, the difficulties of communication remain,—here as always the bane of West Africa. If the fertile Niger valley produces cotton, the goods have to be taken over 1,200 kilometres to the coast, and the only method of evacuation is by a difficult railway and the uncertain Senegal River. The question of transportation thus looms largely in the problem, but is held to be difficult and costly rather than insurmountable.

Notwithstanding these three sets of difficulties, cotton has remained the centre of attraction in West Africa since 1903, and more strongly than ever after world-production became stationary in 1913. France needs at least three million metric-quintals of raw cotton a year, and the sufferings following the crop-failures of 1903 and 1907 and 1921 brought home to the nation how great a source of weakness this was. Cotton-production became an obsession in the minds of French colonial experts, bridging the gap after assimilation had failed and before *association* had been accepted! It almost appeared as if cotton potentialities afforded the very *raison d'être* of Central Indo-China and the Sudan valley. This was one of the obvious cases where, despite the expenditure involved, the colony had to mould its development according to the needs of the mother-country. It was the national character of the issue at stake, together with the panic on the question, that accounted for the disparity between the emphasis on cotton-production in West Africa and the fragmentary quantities actually grown. In 1922 the yield for all of West Africa was down to 506 tons, yet cotton was the most debated issue in the colony's life,—indeed, since the various irrigation-missions, practically the leading force determining the direction of economic growth.

Needing raw cotton so grievously, France was staking the future of West Africa on the conversion of the Sudan into a vast cotton-field. Railways, irrigations, ports, and general governmental effort all crystallized in this direction; and the solid bases built by the groundnuts and timber and palm-oil of the coastal-regions were deemed to be chiefly raw-material for the transformation of the Niger valley. The *hinterland*-issue was playing as grave a part in the colony's history as it had done thirty years before, but in a changed and far more specialized form. Economic development narrowed down to a move from the coastal cultures to the exploitation of the Timbuktu-Bamako river-region,—an exploitation which has become the determining *motif* of West African

<sup>47</sup> Mission Béline, *Les Irrigations du Niger. Études et Projets* (1921), or Y. Henry, *Irrigations et Cultures irriguées en Afrique Tropicale* (1918), p. 187 *et seq.*

policy. A remarkably clear, even if somewhat chimerical, policy has been outlined, and there has been a unity of direction and effort quite unusual in French colonization. It was unusual to have the whole development of the country determined by economic considerations; and it was doubly unusual to have these economic determinants consistently held from the first. And although the actual achievement has been comparatively little and the whole project seems to minimize the natural and psychological difficulties, such a unity of effort augurs well for the future, especially in view of the turn from the unprofitable policies of the last twenty years.

West Africa has thus come to mean a ring of coastal-cultures round the Sudan-basin, and the Sudan-basin, though potentially a "multi-culture" region, has come to mean an irrigated cotton-area, an Egypt of the West. The economic programme of the colony is delightfully compact and simple; but whether the meagre returns of the last twenty years are a sample of the ultimate result, or only of the negative period of origins, remains an unsolved question. Certainly the projects for irrigation and State-aid and railways have changed the premises even since 1918, although it is still too early to say anything of the ultimate result.

Beyond oleaginous products and cotton, there is little in West African life except pasture. The pastoral industry, so suited to the leading race of the Peuhls, has always been one of the colony's most stable riches, but curiously enough (and this is found in every French colony without exception) the French have not been able to develop it to any great extent, despite a conscientious study of similar conditions in America and Australia. Before the flocks and herds were decimated by the great plague of 1919, there were about eight million oxen and 4½ million sheep in West Africa, mostly in the Sudan,—the Niger-bend where the Peuhls live.<sup>48</sup> Here, in the north, pastoral pursuits are increasing, although the increase is largely counteracted by an ominous decline in the south, especially in Dahomey and the Ivory Coast. Up to the present, cattle have been the only pastoral export, but there has been a continual decline since 1913. The outlook is far from promising, and one wonders as to the effective return obtained from spending a million francs on pastoral development as compared with the same sum spent on cotton projects.

On the whole, French West Africa remains an agricultural country, with a secondary pastoral industry and no manufacturing save for local needs. It is a country of forests and prairies, and, given the necessary labour-supplies and communications, of practically unlimited resources.

<sup>48</sup> François (1920), *op. cit.*, p. 76.

Émile Zola, in his *Fécondité*, made it the future centre for provisioning the world, and this conceit has some foundation in fact. Even putting aside the project for making the Niger a vast reservoir of cotton (though this is to remove the nerve-centre of the West African organism), the country can supply all the groundnuts, palm-oil, and timber that France needs, and, arguing from the model of the Gold Coast, a large part of the cocoa; and these are but the *immediate* returns.<sup>49</sup>

As in all agricultural countries, the extent of development depends on capital, communications, and labour. The first, in view of the country's undeveloped riches and the comparative popularity of this colony in France, has not hitherto afforded an insuperable obstacle. The last two have provided the difficulties. Communications and labour have been the clue to the country's travail, especially during the transformation of methods after about 1914. Until then, West Africa was concerned mainly with commerce and trade, supported by the groundnuts and oil of the coastal regions. There was both stability and ease of exploitation, but only within certain limits. As agriculture went inland towards the Sudan, however, the needs changed. Agriculture had to become more scientific and industrialized, the more so because the population was not relatively dense. But once increased production by these methods was sought, inexorable limits were imposed by the two factors above-mentioned. Labour was scarce, and, outside of the Senegal, was not found where the rich lands were: and then, what was the use of producing goods at Bamako, when they could not get from the Niger to the coast, 1,200 kilometres away, unless at a prohibitive cost? <sup>50</sup>

For some time after the conquest, the French laboured under the illusion that West Africa was thickly populated, and they visioned a huge black army as well as ample labour for the largest schemes of development. Accordingly, from the moment conquest ceased, the cry was all for railways. The Niger did not go to the sea in French territory, and the Senegal, the most obvious way to the interior, was navigable to Kayes only for 2½ months in the year and, at the best, was an extremely precarious passage-way. This left railways as the only medium of communication in such a vast country. As Governor-General Roume, the economic founder of West Africa, said in 1906, summing up the whole of the colony's problem:—

“The object is to open to civilization that vast part of the African continent given to France in the partition and which, by reason of its configuration, has so far been kept in primitive barbarism. The real cause of the

<sup>49</sup> Article by Cosnier in *Colonies et Marine*, 15/2/20, p. 85; *L'Afrique Française*, May 1923, p. 223.

<sup>50</sup> *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1920, p. 39

prolonged stagnation is that this rich region was separated from the rest of the world by the Sahara on the north, an inhospitable coast on the east and south and a dense curtain of tropical forest, all of which formed practically impassable obstacles to civilizing actions. Even in the interior, the lack or uncertainty of communications is still almost complete. Rivers encumbered by rapids allow only an irregular and inadequate traffic, and it is only round the great navigable bend of the Middle Niger that relatively important centres of civilization have been possible. The resources of science and capital, however, permit us now to open these countries, hitherto hermetically sealed by Nature, by improving the few natural sea-outlets, by correcting the defects of the riverways wherever possible, and above all by creating artificial routes,—the railways.”<sup>51</sup>

In West Africa, unlike colonies of the type of Indo-China, where there are more waterways, railways are the indispensable conditions of advance, because, outside of the coastal-fringe, economic development cannot be conceived without them. In such a country of distances, policy *must* converge on railways. Roume therefore made railway-construction the pivot of his economic policy, and quoted with approval Sir Walter Egerton's pronouncement of policy for South Nigeria and Lagos: “If you ask what my policy is, I should say, ‘*Open means of communication,*’ and if you would wish for additional information, I would reply, ‘*Open more of them*’!”

The position on paper was simple. The two river-beds of the Senegal and Niger sprawled all over the map. The former was navigable to Kayes and provided an outlet to the groundnut country, but it led to St. Louis, which was rendered practically useless as a port by the constantly shifting sandbanks. Every trade-artery leading inland from St. Louis had some grave disadvantage connected with it, and the town, which owed its growth rather to Faidherbe's choice in the early days than to any natural advantages, was situated several kilometres inland from the mouth of the river.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, Dakar, to the south, had a fine harbour, a better position on the ocean-routes, and a rich region beyond. The Government therefore decided to make Dakar the port of entry for all of West Africa and to make their railway-scheme converge on this terminus.<sup>53</sup> The first railway was thus built across the burnt plains of Cayor to carry goods from St. Louis to Dakar (1887). That meant that goods could come from Kayes to the port by river and rail-

<sup>51</sup> J. Chautard, *Les Chemins de Fer de l'Afrique Occidentale Française* (1909), p. 7. Compare article by Governor Angoulvant in *Colonies et Marine*, Sept. 1921, p. 531. François (1907), p. 311 *et seq.*, reprints Roume's speech of 1901 in full.

<sup>52</sup> Articles by Rousseau in *La Géographie*, July 1925, *et seq.* *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1912, p. 370, or *Le Mois Colonial*, April 1926.

<sup>53</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 14/7/79. For history, see Chautard (1909), *op. cit.*, p. 9 *et seq.*

way, and thus France was brought to the fringe of the Sudan, the richest province of West Africa.

At this stage the second phase of the problem emerged. The Niger was navigable (at least for half the year) from Ansongo, right away beyond Timbuktu, to Koulikoro, the nearest point to Kayes. If a railway were run across the desert from Kayes on the Senegal to Koulikoro on the Niger, therefore, it would tap the whole *hinterland* of the Sudan and Niger. The Niger railway thus become the centre of attention in the early years of this century. It had been voted as early as 1881, in Ferry's time, but the anti-colonials, after strenuously opposing the original scheme, had on more than one occasion stopped its construction.<sup>54</sup> Under such conditions, it was not until the close of 1904 that the Niger was actually reached, and by this time the railway through Guinea had tapped the river lower down.

These railways were successful from the beginning. Indeed, the famous "groundnut-railway" in Senegal had doubled the colony's exports by 1901, and Roume, in view of this improvement, emphasized Colonel Thys' dictum about the Belgian Congo—"that the railway is not only a collector but a *creator* of transports, and that civilization follows the locomotive." This was obviously the case in Senegal, but it was an unusual natural phenomenon that gave most point to Roume's arguments. The French Parliament had hitherto been dubious about extending West African railways and had held that the Senegal River, especially now that it was linked by a railway to the Niger Basin, afforded a sufficient outlet. Just at the crucial moment, in 1902, the river itself took a hand, by failing to rise! Becoming unnavigable, it completely isolated the interior. Roume simply had to point to these facts and stand back, because no argument could avail against this striking object-lesson. His railway-programme was at once adopted in its entirety!<sup>55</sup>

He wanted a primary system directly linking the Niger and the whole Sudanese region with the sea,—Faidherbe's old idea of a trunk-line. This trans-Sudan railway was the pivot of the whole scheme, as it was to be the skeleton for the gradual building-up of the economic policy of West Africa. Yet, because the various colonies were only prolongations to the sea of a common *hinterland*, subsidiary local lines became necessary: hence the Guinea railway and the less vital extensions to the Ivory Coast and Dahomey. After all, however, these were not important for the Niger region.

<sup>54</sup> Compare *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 4/7/83; Chautard (1909), *op. cit.*, p. 14 *et seq.*

<sup>55</sup> *Journal Officiel*, 10/7/03, for law and reports on it. Hubert's report is in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., docts. parl., 1903, No. 848.

The organization of the Government-General in 1902 removed the greatest local obstacle to this plan, and the failure of river-transport had already disposed of metropolitan dogmatism. Hence, 95½ million francs of the loans of 1903 and 1906 were earmarked for railways.<sup>56</sup>

The actual advance, however, was not continuous, and by the time of his programme of 1906, Roume was forced to abandon the wider scheme and to concentrate on the lines in Guinea and the Ivory Coast. After 1920, the success of the Niger railways and the stress on the Sudan "multicultures" once more revived the original scheme, and, despite the tremendous difficulties, the lines were completed by 1923, at a total cost of 105 million francs,—more than 157,000 francs a kilometre. This meant a virtual transformation of conditions in West Africa. The Sudan was now linked to the sea the whole year round. Having an outlet and a market, this region had come to mean very much of the federation's activities, and internal development at once commenced. The region resembled the Senegal when it was traversed by the St. Louis railway thirty years before. Villages and towns sprang up as the railway advanced, and desert spaces were planted with groundnuts. The railway had made the desert fertile.<sup>57</sup>

The change had at least three important implications for the Sudan. In the first place, the natives were provided with an incentive for development. The trade brought in by the railway meant new desires, and the fulfilment of these desires meant increased agriculture. The natives were changed from listless idlers growing only enough for their immediate personal needs to cultivators producing for an outside market. They were flung, as it were, into a world of economic progress, and, as everywhere where modernization enters native life, this commenced a period of acute social change. Secondly, a fresh link was formed between the Niger and the Senegal. Up to this, they had been separated by the uncertainty of the Senegal River, and transport, inordinately dear as it was, was limited to essentials. Thus, West Africa, producing and wasting rice and millet in the up-country districts, was importing these products from Madagascar and Indo-China for the coastal regions,—an absurd anomaly. The railway changed this and enabled the Senegal, which can grow only groundnuts, to get its food supply from the Sudanese interior; and, vice versa, allowed outside goods to go inland and so to transform the life of the river tribes more rapidly. This meant, thirdly, a revolution not only in the economic life of the Sudan, but in ideas and general outlook. The moment of the sophistication of the Sudanese tribesmen was at hand, and the wines and perfumes, the sugar and jams that the trains brought in had an influence far wider than their own

<sup>56</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, 1906, p. 185.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 1923, pp. 582, 583.

intrinsic importance would seem to justify. The railways therefore enriched West Africa, transformed conditions in the Senegal and Sudan and shifted the centre of gravity inland to the Niger-lands,—that vast undeveloped “multiculture” country, with its alluring vistas of cotton and agriculture. Irrigation would begin where the railway left off, and more and more West Africa would mean the great interior. The various elements of the West African problem had all assumed different quantities by the completion of this railway, which itself was the consummation of a sequence of ideas and a general plan emerging for over forty years. It brought the Sudan to the coast, and lifted the concept of a West Africa centring on the Niger from the realms of imagination to the world of everyday fact. The transformation of the interior was hence-forward practicable, and indeed inevitable. The difficulties had been removed, the age of realization was at hand.

But no sooner was the struggle for communications partly solved than the labour-question emerged in all its grimness. The trouble in this connection is twofold. There is a general scarcity of labour all over West Africa, and an unequal distribution of such labour-resources as are available. The whole country has scarcely three persons to the square kilometre. While some parts, like Senegal and the Upper Volta, were sufficiently peopled, others had a dearth of men, notably in the Niger valley, which is the key to the whole French scheme of development. Until the trans-Sudan railway was built, the difficulty of communication minimized the displacement of labour from one region to another, and such emigration as there was was from the crowded Senegal into British Gambia and from the Upper Volta into Northern Nigeria,—that is, both away from French possessions. The railway, by linking Senegal and the Sudan, gave an impetus to an interchange in a direction healthy to France, and, even in the years of construction, the migration of native villages was a striking feature.

Despite this amelioration, the labour-difficulty in general remains unsolved, and apparently insoluble. It is at the basis of West African affairs and imposes an inexorable limit on progress. It confines the possible development to certain bounds, and makes impossible the realization of all the advantages which natural conditions would allow. Difficulties of capital and communication could be removed; the labour-shortage in such a tropical climate, and with immigration out of the question, cannot.

At first France did not realize the full import of this problem. While noticing that the population was not as dense as had been supposed and was annoyingly distributed from an economic point of view, the Government was not seriously troubled. This was especially the case

in the period from 1906 to 1914, when French colonial policy in Africa was dominated by the idea of providing "a reservoir of men" for military purposes. As has been seen, a general anæmia characterized colonial policy in those years, and the only objective that aroused interest was to drain the colonies of men. The country was content to mouth a phrase like "reservoirs of men" and ignore the facts of the situation. All that they could see was that the Belgian Congo had a native army, the Germans were using natives against the Arab slavers, and France had its millions of negroes in West Africa,—negroes who, lacking interests and needs, would not aid in their country's development and simply idled. From 1908 on, therefore, Colonel Mangin, the originator of the scheme, made the mobilization of these natives an actual political issue. The Budget-Report of 1910 adopted Ponty's formula, "20,000 *tirailleurs* in four years," and the project became law by an overwhelming majority.<sup>58</sup> This was only a commencement and the tendency continued<sup>59</sup> until the Army Commission in 1922 demanded 60,000 men a year from West Africa!

From the first, those who stood for economic development along the line of Roume's programme showed the suicidal nature of this policy, especially in a country so situated as West Africa was from a demographical point of view. As they demonstrated, France was on the horns of a dilemma in this regard. "The issue is whether we wish to make West Africa a reservoir of primary materials and goods or a reservoir of men? And we have not the right to choose. Raw materials are there in almost unlimited quantities, while men are found in very insufficient numbers."<sup>60</sup> More soldiers meant fewer workers, and there were not enough workers for the present stage of economic development alone. The two Governors-General of the time, Van Vollenhoven and Merlin, clearly pointed this out. To take 60,000 of the most robust men every year for a term of three years meant a continual mobilization of 180,000 men. Eliminating nomads and the useless sections of the population, this meant that, according to the Census of 1921, only 622,500 men, mostly middle-aged, remained to provide sustenance for twelve million people, not to speak of public works and the economic development of the land. Merlin holds therefore that such a utilization of man-power is not only unproductive but economic self-annihilation,—a deliberate weakening of the country's resources.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Mangin, *La Force Noire* (1910), pp. 262, 316 *et seq.* Debates are in *Journal Officiel*, Dets., 8/4/11; 20, 22/2/10. The voting was 386 to 25.

<sup>59</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Dets., 19/6/12, for Millerand's pronouncement of policy in this regard.

<sup>60</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Feb. 1922, p. 109.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1922, pp. 272-276.

The trouble is, as the above figure of 622,500 men shows, that the weakening is qualitative as well as quantitative. The total population is in itself too small, and the growing degree of enfeeblement in the last few decades makes the withdrawal of the physically fit doubly inadvisable. The changed conditions of life have entailed much depopulation, and, even where this was not the case, a grave weakening of the racial stocks. The health-position is one of the most melancholy features of West African colonization. There is an infantile mortality of 33 per cent. ; alcohol and general excesses lead to decline ; and, especially in the coastal regions, where the change has been greater, the stock is weakened throughout. The native finds himself appalled by his changing environment and too readily grasps the pleasant evils of the new order and discards the more difficult good points ; and the result of too much incautious probing in this direction is ruin, both individual and racial. The old life was notoriously bad in many ways, but still it had a certain balance suitable to the environment in which the native had to live and adapted to the means of his existence. But French penetration especially with the speeding-up of evolution by railway development, has produced a general dislocation, a readily felt but inexplicable gap in native life,—a general lack of cohesion. In short, it leads to a disintegration affecting both body and mind, and too often placing a premium on bodily excesses, especially with a population predisposed to this and as emotional as the negro type. The result is an appalling lowering of the general standard of health, induced both by what the white man destroyed and by what he introduced. Tribal order was lessened and, with the lessening of authority, went a break-up in every sphere of life. At the same time, rum and wine and new foods and unhealthy *bric-à-brac* of European civilization came in. The naturally great troubles accompanying the introduction of a European economy were thus intensified. This was still more so, because the native population ground down from time immemorial beneath the heel of foreign conquerors, knew only the psychology of oppression. They lacked balance of character, and in particular, once the sanctions of a state based on slavery were removed, interpreted freedom as licence. Restraint was an unknown quantity in many regions. Both on the coast and inland, therefore, there was a general disruption, in the wake of which stalked physical decline,—the price paid by native races the world over for the mixed benefits of Occidental civilization.

The statistics on this matter in West Africa are appalling, especially when it is remembered that the whole future development of the colony depends on, or is at least limited by, the quantity and the quality of native labour. When war conditions necessitated a close survey of native man-

power, the position was manifested in all its weakness. French Guinea, because of the progress of peasant-proprietorship there, is by no means the most badly-off of the West African colonies : yet even there, of 3,000 recruits, only 115 could be accepted as physically fit, and these 3,000 had already been chosen by the native chiefs as the healthiest of their tribesmen. At Mamou, all save 35 were rejected out of 4,000 ; at Kindia, 1,331 out of 1,400 !<sup>62</sup> The deterioration of the native stock was thus beyond dispute, and these were the descendants of the men who had so strenuously fought for their independence under Samory and Ahmadou less than thirty years before ! And the difficulty is that the evil is not only a bodily one and thus remediable by extended medical facilities : it has a distinct psychological element which always enters to make the problem of native depopulation so aggravated and intangible.

The future of West Africa thus becomes jeopardized by the decline of the natives, and France has examined every possible alternative field. Chinese and Moroccans were tried for the Niger railway ; Annamites were brought in ; and there was an attempted convict-settlement. But the climate won in every case. Fate has dealt the French a vital blow in making climatic conditions such as will allow the labour only of the acclimatized negroes or the " red " races of the north, like the Peuhls. Development, therefore, is rigidly circumscribed, and France has to stand aside and watch the natural riches of the country lying idle and to a great degree unexploited. This is the supreme irony of her West African colonization—this partial paralysis of a latently rich land.

#### COMMERCE

The general commerce of West Africa has reflected the optimism and depression of these periods. From the first, there was a steadily growing prosperity, but the very likeness of the exports has been such as to occasion misgivings. Up to the achievement of federation, development was fragmentary and slow. The total commerce was 79 million francs in 1895 and 130 million in 1900, but much of this was due to military expenses and the cost of establishment, and to the trade from regions newly opened up, like Dahomey.

At the final moment of federation, in 1902, the outlook was not very promising. The Senegal had just left a long bout of yellow-fever, which had compromised its ports and general development : Guinea had only one section of its railway built, no credit for the rest, and little trade ; the Ivory Coast and Dahomey were virtually bankrupt, and all three together had less trade than the Senegal ; and the Sudan, lacking an outlet to the sea, simply did not exist from an economic point of view.

<sup>62</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, June 1922, p. 272.

But federation meant credit and energetic action and public-works, the result being that trade increased from 131 million francs in 1902 to 277 millions in 1913.<sup>63</sup> The budget-receipts, moving in harmony, went up from 27 to 88 million francs, and this progress was natural and continuous, as the table shows:—

	IMPORTS.	EXPORTS.		
	(Millions of Francs.)			
1900 . . . . .	69	60		
1913 . . . . .	150	123		
1916 . . . . .	144	106		
1921 . . . . .	372	259	(franc at 62.5 to £1)	
1922 . . . . .	351	311	„ „ 62.5	„
1923 . . . . .	533	419	„ „ 75	„
1924 . . . . .	764	653	„ „ 88	„

The changing value of the franc detracts from the value of such a table, and the difference between internal purchasing-value and foreign exchange-value prevents any truthful reduction to one standard; but, despite these drawbacks, it is evident that there has been a continuous increase.

On the other hand, apart from the total values of exports, it is amazing how little advance there has been from a developmental point of view. The exports are still 85 per cent. oleaginous, as they have always been; pastoral products do not figure at all, outside of leather; and the new crops like cotton have not come up to expectations. Nor is France's share in the trade of West Africa increasing. The colony has never been assimilated to the *tariff-régime* of France, because of the enormous length of its land-frontier and the intrusion of five foreign possessions along its coast-line. Protection on the usual French model was thus out of the question. The result was naturally a larger share of foreign trade than was usual in French colonies, despite the limited protection which came in in 1905. France has very little more of West African trade, relatively speaking, than she had at the commencement of exploitation, and controls less than half the imports and only slightly more of the exports. Although the exports are almost exclusively the groundnuts and palm-oil and timber that France needs so badly, over 40 per cent. goes abroad. The French share of the imports is even declining, because of the competition of British cotton-goods, so important in native countries. This proportion would be far worse, if the more advantageous position of France in the Senegal, where she controls three-quarters of the trade, did not counteract and largely hide the hold of the foreigner in the other seaboard States. If France desired to monopolize colonial trade here as she did elsewhere, she has clearly failed, because the situa-

<sup>63</sup> Merlin in *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1920, p. 37.

tion has not changed as far as she was concerned, except perhaps for the worse. There has been a mocking consistency about it year by year, and France can do nothing to counteract the foreign competition, either by tariffs or actual rivalry.

#### THE POST-WAR CRISIS

Despite this unfavourable allocation of trade, West Africa in itself was in a fundamentally sound position before the war of 1914. Because it was an agricultural land, this continued throughout the period of hostilities. Moreover, since there had been little boom and no wasteful alienation of the country's resources, as in Algeria, the colony was enabled to traverse the post-war crisis in a comparatively safe manner. This does not mean to say that the crisis was not acute. If anything, it was doubly acute, because the general mondial crisis was reinforced and intensified by a local problem due to the depreciation of the currency.

Up to 1920 the country's reserves and agricultural production enabled it to weather the crisis, although there had been a severe struggle, especially in Guinea. This colony, between 1913 and 1918, had to pay for its ill-advised economic policy. It had staked its whole future on rubber, and the natives, finding it cheaper to buy food from outside, had neglected other crops, with the result that rice had to be imported to an essentially agricultural province. By becoming a "monoculture" land on the model of Senegal with its groundnuts, Guinea seemed to go ahead by leaps and bounds, but the policy was at basis a suicidal one. The dependence on a single commodity introduced an element of uncertainty, and, when rubber prices fell, the inevitable crisis came. Revenue dwindled, trade went down to 10 million francs in all, and hundreds of the Syrian traders who monopolized small commerce had to go. But the experience was a salutary one in the long run, for the native perforce had to turn to cereals. As a result, Guinea once more became a cereal-exporting country by 1917-1918 and entered a stable economic phase, based on the industrialization of agricultural production. Its rich land and water-power made it one of the most flourishing of the African possessions, and already there were 254 native plantations by 1923. Guinea had weathered a particularly severe crisis and had become a model for the other States.<sup>64</sup>

By this time, the Senegal, formerly the envy of the other States by reason of its groundnut-staple, had also been flung into the vortex by the unprecedented decline in the price of groundnuts from 300 to 60 francs. Unlike Guinea, the land was so poor that no alternative crops were possible. Senegal was a "monoculture" land by compulsion

<sup>64</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Dec. 1923, p. 634.

rather than choice : hence, a fall in the price of its staple meant utter ruin. To make matters worse, the groundnut crop itself failed in 1921, and the Senegal, unable to keep its finances afloat, was compelled to fall back on grants from the federal Treasury.<sup>65</sup>

The other colonies were reasonably prosperous, although suffering from the inflation of the currency. This was the position when the world crisis of 1921 exercised its repercussions on West Africa. Despite the continued inflation, trade declined in its total amount, and the crisis was only weathered by the aggressive policy of the Government-General, which insisted on balancing its budget and carrying on as usual, despite the added burdens of taxation that this necessitated. By this means the malignant growth was cut out before it could reduce the patient to impotence. The period of economic readaptation commenced as early as 1922, and, taking depreciation into account, trade remained practically constant. The crisis had been met by facing the facts as soon as they emerged and by meeting the added responsibilities thus entailed.<sup>66</sup>

At the same time, the organization of economic councils in each group (1921) enabled an exhaustive survey of the country's riches to be made and eliminated the possibility of any resources remaining untouched.<sup>67</sup> The upshot was that, although West Africa had to confront the general French problem of depreciation, it was not made worse, as in Algeria, by an undue prolongation of the world crisis or by any peculiar local crises.

The colony remained in a sound position, and its affairs, especially when Sarraut's policy of public works extended to it in 1922, were characterized by an atmosphere of optimistic aggressiveness, shared only by Madagascar and Indo-China. It had had a sound development up to the crisis : that, together with the vigorous policy of its officials and the presence of its undeveloped resources, especially in the Sudan basin, enabled it to retain its prosperity. Hence, its claim was justified that it was one of the three most successful colonies of France. This is the more so because of the natural conditions and the recency of the conquest. Indeed, West Africa might have gone further in its boasting, and argued that its development had been more continuous than that of Indo-China and more intensive than that of Madagascar, so that, in every way, it ranks high in the list of French colonial successes, especially for its native policy and its programmes of agricultural specialization.

<sup>65</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Nov. 1921, p. 388 ; March 1921, p. 56.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, April 1922, p. 198.

<sup>67</sup> *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1922, p. 43.

## CHAPTER IX

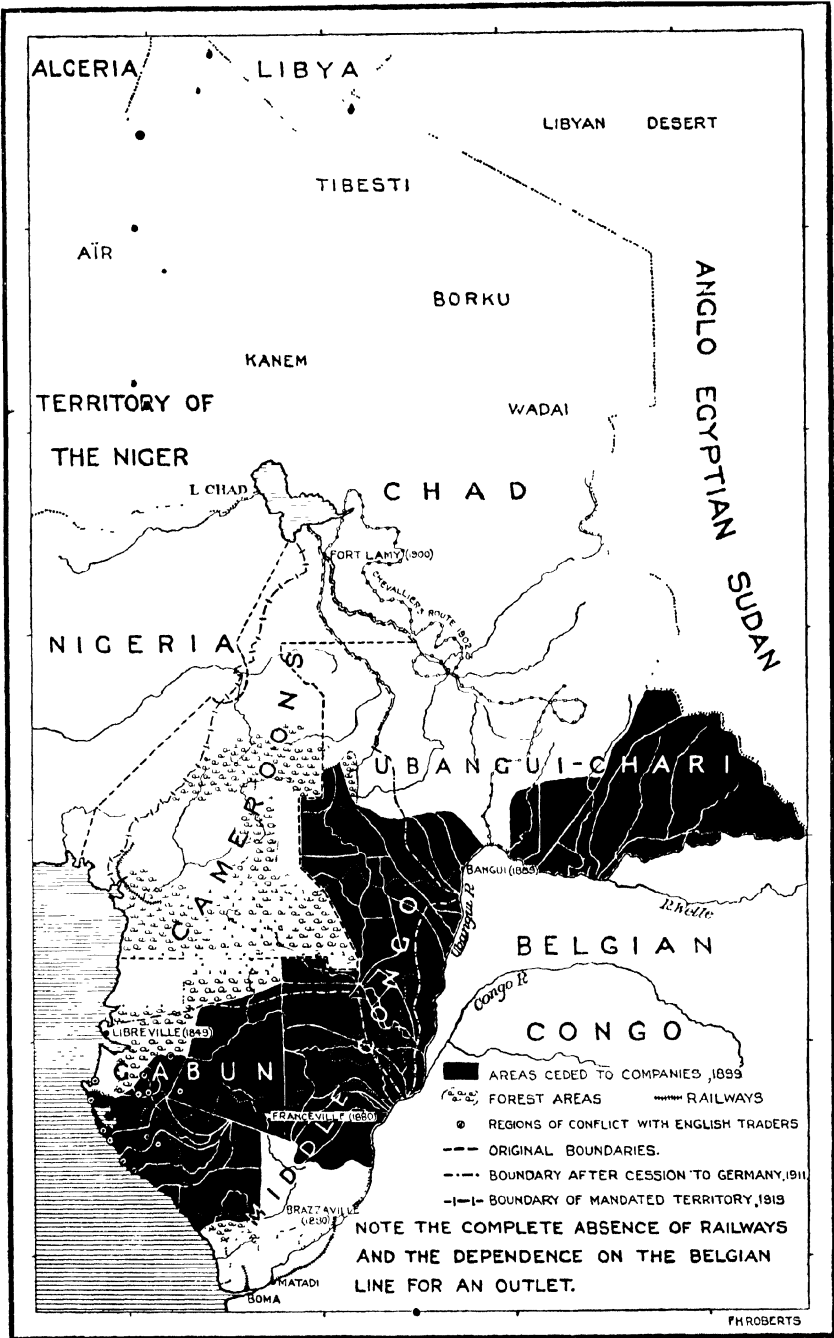
### FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA (THE CONGO)

#### I. Growth of the Colony

THE French obtained a footing on the Gabun coast of the Congo at an early date, because the caravels of Dieppe and La Rochelle naturally crept round from the Guinea posts. But, despite a rapid growth in the second half of the seventeenth century, all of this promising structure crumbled with old France; and there was no revival until France intervened in the thirties of last century to end the slave trade, or at least to see that it was not openly conducted under the French flag. To facilitate this, a concession of both banks of the Gabun was obtained in 1839 and, four years later, the building of Aumale fort revived the old tradition of French ownership. France was once more active on the Congo coast, and conditions quickly duplicated those of the seventeenth century. Libreville, founded in 1848 by the negroes freed from a captured slaver, soon became a centre of active commerce and the administrative post of the embryonic colony. Further treaties with the native chiefs extended the strip of coastal influence, until by 1875, France stood, hesitant but expectant, with her eyes fixed on the rivers that went to the absolutely unknown interior, a beckoning land of mystery. The Ogowé River, according to the natives, cleft the whole of Africa in twain and led direct to the Atlantic, so that its masters could drain the economic resources from all of mid-Africa.<sup>1</sup>

In the seventies, French explorers set out to ascertain how much truth there was in this tale and to see if the few trading-posts of the coast marked the end or only the beginning of the French colony. In the van was Savorgnan de Brazza, the man to whom the French Congo, in its modern form, is due. His first expedition of 1875-1878 disproved the tales about the Ogowé, but showed that it was still an indirect path inland, because the point where its navigability stopped abutted on the Alima. In other words, de Brazza had grasped the salient fact that the forest-interior could be penetrated by river-travel, step on step, and that the network of waterways, if not a path, was at least a staircase

<sup>1</sup> Ancel on the formation of the Congo in *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1902, p. 79 *et seq.*; M. Rouget, *L'Expansion Coloniale au Congo Français* (1906), p. 24 *et seq.*



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• DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRENCH CONGO

to the centre of the continent. His second expedition (1879-1882) realized the implications of this discovery. He founded Franeville on the Upper Ogowé and Brazzaville, opposite the Belgian post of Stanley Pool, on the Congo itself (1880), and these two posts became the nuclei of France's Congo lands. A treaty he arranged with the natives gave France a protectorate over a huge territory embracing all of the north bank of the Congo between Brazzaville and the Ubangui. De Brazza had thus transformed a hemmed-in coastal strip into a colony four times the size of France.<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately for the French Congo, the mother-country at this time was swept by what even the official accounts described as "a great wave of public opinion." French national pride was stirred by the Congo Association of 1876 and by the expeditions of the bitterly detested Stanley (it is amazing to note the vituperation still poured on Stanley in France). Accordingly, France directly fought for this vast Congo region, which was deemed to be the key of Central Africa. At the same time, it had become evident that the rubber-vine, discovered some three decades earlier, was found far inland, right up the Ogowé valley, and beyond as far as explorers had been.

Hence, as Rouvier said in the Deputies in introducing the law of November, 1882, to ratify the treaties arranged by de Brazza, France went to the Congo for trade,—“as a commercial nation, seeking not so much to extend its dominion as to enwiden its markets and civilizing influence.”<sup>3</sup> The wild rubber-vines, with their trailing festoons, had already entwined themselves round French policy in the Congo, like a sarsaparilla-parasite on a gum-tree; and, all talk of “civilizing influence” to the contrary, France was there for rubber,—red rubber. The French Chambers therefore waxed enthusiastic in ratifying de Brazza's treaty with Makoko and his vassals, and not even the anti-colonials of the day had much to say about this acquisition.<sup>4</sup> They opposed colonization *per se*, it is true, but this was different: this was merely taking over a vast reservoir of raw rubber and forestalling the other European competitors for the rich prize. Three and a quarter million francs were voted to organize the new territory (1883-1884),<sup>5</sup> and thus, without the loss of a single life, France acquired all of the northern half of the Congo basin, and perhaps even the unknown back-country to the Chad or even to the Nile swamp-lands. All in all, “it was an elegant and glorious page of

<sup>2</sup> Neuville et Bréard, *Les Voyages de Savorgnan de Brazza : Ogooué et Congo, 1875-1882* (1884), p. 150 *et seq.*, for documents; Ancel, *op. cit.*, p. 99 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 12/11/82.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 21/11/82, 3/12/82. The convention is in *Journal Officiel*, 3/12/82, or Du Clercq, Vol. XIV, p. 74.

<sup>5</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 11/1/83.

our colonial history," and France was prepared even to overlook the fact that the loathed Ferry had been responsible for the organization of the country and that it was a new weapon for the expansionists' armoury. The tricolour had been run up before Stanley's golden-starred banner, and France rang with the tale of Sergeant Malamine and his handful of Senegalese *tirailleurs* gravely welcoming Stanley's pretentious expedition at Stanley Pool in the name of France! Besides, rubber was coming down the Ogowé! The few trading-posts from Libreville to Boma had become a vast colony, and the future seemed a roseate vision of hope, rubber-lined!

But Africa did not end at Franceville, and the bush beckoned, its humid nostalgia notwithstanding. The interior beyond the rivers was now endowed with the same air of mystery as the old "Mountains of the Moon" had been half a century earlier. The age of militaristic expansion in Africa was at hand, and the new colonial military school, so active in the Algerian desert and West Africa and Upper Tonkin, included the Congo *hinterland* in its operations. And the rubber-vine still trailed inland, while on the east Egypt's cotton was an indisputed fact; and what lay between? Soldiers and traders combined, therefore, to move up the Congo to the Ubangui-bend, and beyond to the north and east. The move to the Chad and the Chari (1885-1895) was in many senses the ecstatic point in the French colonial movement, the peak of the colonial orgasm, so to speak. This was the moment when, following Under-Secretary Etienne's dream of 1890, France was gripped with the enticing vision of an empire from the Congo to the Mediterranean, and from the Senegal to the Nile basin.

There was thus a clear succession of steps to round off the Congo lands. De Brazza had simply wanted a *hinterland* for the Ogowé and to tap part of the lower Congo's trade. Then came a moment of quiescence when, in order to counteract British victories on the Niger mouth and to secure a share of the Niger trade, France agreed at the Congress of Berlin (1884-1885) to internationalize the Congo as well as the Niger.<sup>6</sup> For gains in other regions, she consented to become a partner in a curious colonial collectivism on the Congo. But this soon gave way to the new phase of winning the country north of the Ubangui bend.<sup>7</sup>

By about 1890 the French Congo consisted of two distinct sections, Gabun (the early coastal-region) and the Middle-Congo, de Brazza's river lands. Now a third layer, a distinct region economically, was

<sup>6</sup> British Parliamentary Paper, 1885.—*Correspondence regarding the West African Conference at Berlin, with protocols and General Act*, 5 parts.

<sup>7</sup> Documents are in Dubois et Terrier, *Un Siècle d'Expansion Coloniale* (1902), p. 626 *et seq.*

added with the penetration of the more northerly zone, the land that afterwards became the Ubangui-Chari colony. This movement was aided by the changed atmosphere in African affairs after the agreement of 1892 between France and the Congo State. This replaced the canons of the Congress of Berlin by an entirely new set. It was the virtual deathblow of the old international and free-trade ideas as the arbiter of Central African affairs, and introduced the newer idea of a direct connection between territorial sovereignty and distinct economic and tariff policies. The division of Africa had proceeded so rapidly and had advanced so far that the rules of 1885, theoretically desirable though they were, could no longer hold. The exploitation had become *nationally economic*, and France therefore moved the more rapidly to round off her Congo lands. Military, economic, and diplomatic considerations were all favourable and pointing in the same direction.

France had already obtained the Ubangui by a convention of 1887 with the Congo Free State, and was becoming intrigued with the implication of the discovery that it ran, not north as was supposed, but east,—that is, it opened a pathway to the Nile. This discovery, coinciding as it did with the wishes of the colonial party, naturally diverted French efforts for a decade to the east, the result being the move to the Nile and the *impasse* of Fashoda (1898). The Marchand expedition had set out to link Libreville with Obock, only to receive the most striking setback France ever had in the colonial sphere. The convention of March 22, 1899, not only excluded her from the Nile valley and deprived her even of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, but, at a blow, thrust back the Congo expansionist movement to its logical direction. The move east had been killed for ever.<sup>8</sup> The Chari and the new province of Wadai marked the bounds in that direction, to transgress which meant war with England. France thus had no alternative but to continue the northern expansion and the linking of the Congo with her West African and Algerian colonies. This in itself was a desirable and inevitable movement unwisely abandoned a decade earlier for the chimerical and really useless policy of spreading east to the Nile. France had cast aside a logical movement of expansion and a natural economic consolidation for a delusive vision of conquest, and had paid the price in a national rebuff, a discrediting of her entire colonial policy, and ten years of thwarted effort.

The result was that she flung herself more than ever into the northern sphere of activity in the Congo basin,—that is, back to the idea of Lake

<sup>8</sup> For this episode, see Livre Jaune, *Affaires du Haut Nil et du Bahr-el-Ghazal* (1897-1898); English Blue Books, Egypt, Nos. 2 and 3, 1898 (C. 9054-9055). French accounts are in R. de Caix, *Fachoda* (1899), p. 11 *et seq.*; G. Hanotaux, *Fachoda, le Partage de l'Afrique* (1909), p. 69 *et seq.*; and *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 3/4/96, Senate, 6/4/95.

Chad, back to the murdered Crampel's dream of having her three African empires converge and meet on this mystic lake of floating islands. The Chad was to be the pivot of an all-embracing African domain, and would make the Congo no longer an isolated fragment, hemmed in by German and Belgian and English possessions, but a part of the general French organization, deriving its vitality from the knowledge of that connection. The old enthusiasm of the rubber-stage, submerged as it had been by the expansionist disease and the *débâcle* which that disease had led to, was now revived. France was once more labouring under an obsession, this time of the Chad. This was the more so, because the move to the lake was interpreted as a kind of enfiling economic movement, giving a coherence to French efforts and at the same time shutting in other Powers more effectively to the sea. More specifically, the southern part of the unconquered territory had been the nucleus of the old kingdom of Baguirmi, the richest and most powerful of the pre-European powers, and the gate to Wadai, and the desert regions.

The spectacular move to add this northern *hinterland* to the Congo therefore started in earnest with the Fashoda check.<sup>9</sup> The ill-fated Crampel had started it in 1890, more by the emotions evoked by his death than by his actual achievements, and Monteil had reached Lake Chad three years later. But these remained unconsolidated efforts until Gentil, in his famous river-journey of 1897-1898, installed a Resident in the Baguirmi capital and thus brought France face to face with the sinister figure of Rabah, the ruler of the Bornu-Wadai region and the last of the great potentates who resisted the French encroachment in Central Africa. The campaign against him in 1899-1900 rounded-off the French occupation of the Chad territories, and three missions, from Algeria, West Africa, and the Congo respectively, joining at Kousseri on the lake itself, symbolized the essential unity of French Africa, and incidentally extended the Congo thus far north. Gentil had added the fourth colony, called the Chad itself, to the northern bound of Ubangui-Chari, thus giving the Congo federation its region of flocks and herds.<sup>10</sup> The territorial rounding-off of the initial Gabun posts was virtually complete. By 1900, France had the original coastal-forest, the two river colonies of the Congo and the Ubangui, and the pastoral region of the Chad,—four distinct colonies awaiting exploitation and development.<sup>11</sup> Between them, they made up a tenth of Africa, and yet, though their shape would make them appear to be an amorphous mass, and though

<sup>9</sup> Rouget (1906), *op. cit.*, pp. 137-159, or Dubois et Terrier (1902), *op. cit.*, annexes to Chap. IV.

<sup>10</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, August 1900, p. 266.

<sup>11</sup> See reports and organization in *L'Afrique Française*, Feb. 1904, p. 44.

they fell within three distinct economic zones, they were made into one whole by a common river-system, which was always the dominating factor in that vast roadless colony.

This essential unity was marked by, and indeed accounted for, the federation of 1908-1910, which set up a system similar to that of West Africa. Each of the four component colonies retained its economic and administrative autonomy; but a Government-General was set up at Brazzaville to give cohesion and unity of effort to the various local policies and to attend to common matters. The Aumale fort of 1843 had thus led to a huge river-territory, compact by the end of the century, and organized by 1910. By this time, France could face the question of development. The ages of discovery and conquest had passed, and had given way to the new stage when the more difficult problems of economic organization were in the foreground; and the trouble was that France had never been confronted with a problem having the peculiar local features of this one.

## II. Colonization

The problem was obviously a difficult one, especially because its very immensity prevented a grasping of the essentials and a feeling of mastery. Its scope made it difficult of comprehension, because, after all, despite the river-system which seemed to give the country such a unity as the veins do to the body, it was a soulless immensity with geographical differences that seemed to the French to outweigh the common features. When the problem of organization arose, it was not so much the connecting characteristics as the differences that became most evident.

Geographically, there were at least three vitally different regions. The most obvious was the huge tropical forest of 30,000 square miles running parallel to the whole length of coast and barring the way to the river-lands of the interior. This was the rubber-zone *par excellence*: beyond it were the two river-colonies, the Upper Congo and Ubangui-Chari, which were a kind of plateau-country, partly of rich savannah and plains, but merging into a treeless steppe-zone. This was the fertile region from an agricultural point of view, and gave way, through the pastoral lands round the Chad, to the Saharan zone of sand-dunes, the typical Wadai-Chad country. French Equatorial Africa, as the federation became known after 1912, thus resolved itself into a huge coastal-forest, an intermediate series of agricultural plateaux, and a pastoral steppe-zone gradually merging into the northern desert. And this configuration determined the country's development. The forest abutted on the sea and offered the easiest riches: therefore the whole of the colony's economic history has been limited to this belt. The agricultural zone

was feebly populated, shut off from the coast, and unhealthy : therefore it was left alone. The innermost region, the pastoral steppe, was left to native development. For all effective purposes of development, the French Congo was limited to the forest in the two coastal provinces.

The nature and distribution of the natives clinched this limitation of policy. In 1921 there were only 2,847,986 natives, that is, 1.3 to the square kilometre, and the great majority were of a low Bantu type. The most important are the Pahouins of the Ogowé basin,—recent invaders of some ninety years ago who displaced the primitive autochthones and drove them to the recesses of the tropical forest, where disorganized fragments of them still remain. The Pahouins were clearly the future race of the Congo,—independent fighters who were progressive cultivators but who left portage to the more debased negroes. Their energy was proved by their original conquering march and their gradual outward move within the Congo : and that they were adaptable became evident when they built blockhouses to keep out Lebel bullets, and transformed their methods of cultivation to capture the markets of Libreville, seizing the monopoly of manioc and other crops. The French, noting the debased forest-dwellers on the west of them and the maze of backward tribes inland, chose the energetic Pahouins as the basis of future development and have modelled their native policy on this choice.<sup>12</sup>

Beyond the Pahouins in the river-country is a welter of negro peoples, autochthones who, knowing no Pahouin inroads, remained more powerful than their coastal compatriots. None of them, however, can compare with the proud virile Pahouins of the lower regions, and they have lost all tribal individuality in an inextricably confused mixture. Everywhere, however, they are of the same degenerate negro type, living in small groups, and with a system based on fear, polygamy, domestic slavery, and cannibalism. Totally debased, they live only for the immediate sensation without much memory of the past or care for the future. They could only understand force, and the French claimed that such peoples could be influenced only by the Samorys and Rabahs and Behanzins who had bludgeoned them into service in past years. In truth, they did live a life of degradation and cruelty and bestiality, and it seemed difficult to find facts to justify their existence. Save for the Bandas, a somewhat superior immigrant-race who came in in 1868, the difference between them was only that some were lower than the rest. There were many competitors in this region to question the Bondjôs' undesirable pre-eminence as perhaps the most degraded of human races, living only for raids for man-meat. Yet it was on such raw materials that the French had to depend for the development of the land !

<sup>12</sup> H. Paulin, *L'Afrique Equatoriale Française* (1924), p. 35.

Further north there was a third belt of natives, wherein the negro fetishism gave way to the southern limit of Mohammedanism. In general, the tribes in this northern region where the steppe changed to desert were of a more useful type. From Baguirmi north, Islamization becomes marked, and, as one goes away from the territory of the Banda and Banziri, on the Ubangui bend, the agricultural and pastoral regions are entered, and the abysmal degradation of the central river-tribes left behind.<sup>13</sup>

The hopes for the natives of the French Congo thus lie with the immigrant stocks,—with the Pahouin wedge in the coastal region and with the southern extension of Islamized tribes down past the Chad and almost to the Ubangui bend. These two elements are progressive; but, between them, the aborigines are useless and hopeless, and, even to a reformer philanthropically inclined, offer little save material for portage. The native problem which confronted France was thus a difficult one. The population in general was miserably scant: the bulk of them were animal-like rather than human in their characteristics: the progressive Islamized natives were not effectively under control until well on into the present century. Only the Pahouins of the coast offered anything at all when the French came, and France was not clear at first whether she should try to develop all alike or openly declare for this single stock. The natives in the main were thus a dead-weight in the path of advance, and it is little wonder that France followed the Belgian model and saw in them only raw material for a decidedly inefficient exploitation.

On the other hand, although the disadvantages of the Congo were so numerous, they were evident from the first. France could at once perceive the difficulties and the limitations imposed by geography and the natives, and could develop her policy accordingly. The French Congo was thus spared a period of attempted development based on factors which did not pertain there. Policy was from the first determined by the facts of the situation: indeed, the only criticism was that facts alone, to the detriment of humanitarianism and moral factors, influenced the situation. What France saw was a clearly defined problem. In front of her was a huge, rich, unhealthy, unorganized country, with tropical products ready for the taking but with no roads to take them, and with a labour-supply insufficient in number and as low in quality as could be imagined. How therefore could the rubber and timber be got out of the country at the least possible expense? That was the problem,—to surmount the natural difficulties, make the best of the obviously unsatisfactory native position, and drain the country of its

<sup>13</sup> *Annuaire du Gouvernement-General de l'Afrique Equatoriale Française*, 1913, p. 44 et seq.; Rouget (1906), *op. cit.*, pp. 354-380.

forest resources, especially the rubber. In a way, the whole matter was delightfully simple, and the only difficulty was in proportioning the means to the ends. In fact, a certain naïve disingenuousness and a ready rejection of all the duties usually associated with a colonizing power marked this period of French policy in the Congo, and dominated every act there.

Just at this time, when the Congo problem was becoming clearly defined, another influence was beginning to be felt in France. Colonization was becoming increasingly economic, especially after Belgium's success in the Congo and the general partition of Africa. Etienne had made this the basis of his organization of the French African Empire when at the Colonial Office. France was realizing that, her population and industrial position being what it was, and her colonies being situated geographically as they were, her colonial future depended on capitalistic exploitation. Ferry's *mot* that France had to colonize with capital and not men was passing into actual effect; and the conditions of Africa, with their stress on rubber and oil, served to point the argument. When the Congo question arose, there was thus a trend of opinion in France favourable for its solution. Development was to be by means of aggregations of capital, it was clear. It was equally clear that, in view of the prosperity of the Congo Free State and the Niger Company and the East African Company, this capital had to be organized on a company-basis. Conditions and inclination combined to foster a revival of colonization by powerful privileged Companies, especially because France herself, during her first colonial empire, had utilized such Companies as one of the bases of her system.

The actual fight for such Companies began as early as 1890, when Etienne, the Under-Secretary who really organized the colonies for the first time, urged their establishment, and later, in a much-discussed book, *Les Compagnies de Colonisation* (1893), amplified his points. Delcassé, the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the time being, supported him and planned to introduce monopolistic Companies by a simple decree. A new Ministry, alarmed by the scope of his proposals, submitted them to Parliament in a *projet de loi* of July, 1891,<sup>14</sup> but, caught in the political machine, they were shelved for six years. In the interval, a new Under-Secretary had quietly settled the issue by acting independently of Parliament and granting two areas of eleven million hectares in the Congo (an area a fifth the size of France) and three million hectares on the Ivory Coast, with no conditions save a trifling quit-rent (1893). These facts were not made known till two years later and, not unnaturally, led to a considerable

<sup>14</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Feb. 1891, p. 10; June 1891, p. 6; *Journal Officiel*, 17/7/91. Compare *Journal Officiel*, Senate, docts. parl., 1896, p. 42.

uproar, because the movement in favour of Companies, in the interim had made the concessions the more valuable. The Congo concession, which was possible corruption and certainly a supreme indiscretion, was therefore annulled, certain indemnities being given to the holder, for what reasons it is not clear.<sup>15</sup>

By this time the position had again changed. The enthusiasm of 1891 had not only blazed up afresh but had become a veritable conflagration. Every one was speaking of "the colonial rush" in 1897-1898, and the subject had definitely forced itself upon public opinion. France was marching on past Timbuktu in West Africa to the oases in the north, to the Chad in the south, and towards Fashoda. A spirit of colonial adventure was in the air, and was associated with a curious idea of enormous riches to be gained. "Congo uncles" became a phrase of the day. France was rushed along by a semi-delirium, comparable to that neurotic exaltation that was felt in Spain when the silver of Mexico and Peru clad colonial ventures in a halo of riches, or in Holland when the trade of the spice-islands opened up. Now, it was tropical products, ready for the plucking. "Of the 90 million hectares which belong to France," cried Stanley, and the judgment was the more valued because its author was the arch-enemy of France in Central Africa, "there is not a single one without value"; and the country was intoxicated by a belief in a boom of unearned riches. Then Colonel Thys, the promoter of the Matadi railway in the Congo Free State, wanted a concession in the Upper Ubangui district in French territory at one of its most isolated points, and this, together with many claims from northern financiers connected with the Belgians, convinced France that the Congo region *must* be valuable. Speaking of Thys' application, an official French report said later, "the importance of the request and the personality of the asker grasped public opinion"<sup>16</sup>: and just then came the Fashoda crisis, with the desperately fighting frame of mind in which it left France, and the determination to win through at any cost in the Congo, despite England and all the other difficulties.

The result of all these influences was the amazing "rush" during four months of 1899. Paris was in a *furor*, and, a few weeks after Colonel Thys' railway from Stanley Pool to Matadi was opened (incidentally allowing an outlet for the French as well as the Belgian Congo), a Commission of Colonial Concessions was set up in Paris (1898). The result of their work was to introduce the *Concessionnaire* system into French colonization. They drew up a *cahier des charges*, outlining the obligations imposed on the new Companies and defining the position

<sup>15</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Deps., 3/3/95, 28/6/95; Senate, 6/4/95.

<sup>16</sup> E. Gentil, *Rapport d'Ensemble sur la situation du Congo Français en 1903*, p. 10.

in general.<sup>17</sup> In brief, they commenced by circumventing the relevant portions of the General Act of Berlin and the Declaration of London of 1899, which had insisted on equality of economic opportunity and the maintenance of native rights. Reserves were created for the natives in certain parts and a number of zones of free commerce set apart; and this was held to be a sufficient safeguarding of the rights of third persons and natives.

This preliminary difficulty out of the way, the Commission went on to elaborate the terms of the monopoly itself. The Companies were to receive exclusive rights over all "agricultural, forest, and industrial exploitation" for thirty years, at the end of which time all lands which they had improved and all forests where they had regularly collected rubber were to go to them in fee-simple. In return, they were to give the State a certain sum varying with the area of their concession, to pay a quit-rent of 15 per cent. of their annual revenue, to make certain roads, and to help to maintain police, customs, and military services. Beyond that, there were no limitations or obligations imposed on them, except a general proviso that no rights were to be exercised in native villages or on lands used by the tribes. A concession virtually meant the handing-over of a given area to a private Company, with its power untrammelled within that area,—in fact, the setting up of so many *enclaves* of practically independent trading kingdoms within the colony.<sup>18</sup>

The Government had also been preparing for the Companies in other ways. Even while the Commission of Concessions had been preparing its report, Guillaïn, the Minister of Colonies, had forestalled their recommendations by sanctioning a number of important decrees which reorganized the land and forest laws of the colony, the better to make them conform to the needs of the Companies. He had simply assumed that French land-law applied to the Congo and that the State was the legitimate owner of all vacant lands, *res nullius*. The point of this seemingly innocuous generalization was that the rubber-lands, the forests, fell within this category. Guillaïn himself was an engineer closely in touch with the affairs of the Free State, and therefore transferred the bulk of the Belgian regulations in this regard across the river. A second decree of 1899 made all rivers and a strip on either side of them public property,—a measure of fundamental importance in a country so utterly dependent on its waterways as was the French Congo. Thus, with all vacant lands, all forests, all rivers and river-banks reserved to the State, the way was ready for the Companies.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Pauliat Report in *Journal Officiel*, Senate, docts. parl., 1898, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup> G. Bruel, *L'Afrique Equatoriale Française* (1918), p. 430.

<sup>19</sup> These decrees were dated 8/2/99 and 28/3/99 respectively.

The rush for concessions was unprecedented. Between March and July of 1899, no less than forty *concessionnaire* Companies obtained privileges in the French Congo by decree. In all, monopolies were conferred over 650,000 square kilometres of land, a little more than the whole area of France. All of the land from the coast to the Ubangui bend, except for small areas round Libreville and Brazzaville, were claimed in this way, and, in addition, a huge patch on the Upper Ubangui,—all of the immediately or distantly exploitable area of the Congo.<sup>20</sup> It was only the fact that the area round the chief towns was specifically excluded that made it safe from the devouring maw of the *concessionnaires*. The effect of this rush was that the whole of the Congo was handed over to large Companies, with a registered capital of 59¼ million francs.<sup>21</sup> The Government in practice abdicated its functions and limited itself to the imposition of taxes and the collection of quit-rents. It was, in fact, an amazing experiment in what might be termed a multiple delegation of sovereignty, although the actual text of the Companies' concessions allowed no such right.

With a fevered expectancy and ready either to give way to a rapturous ecstasy of speculation or to prick the whole bubble by an equally unreasoning panic, the French capitalists awaited the upshot of their colonial experiment. The first result was entirely unexpected. Certain English merchants had for long been established in the coastal regions. They at once protested against the monopolies as contrary to pre-existing international agreements; and the matter became a governmental one when the *concessionnaire* companies, even in the avowedly free-trade zone, forcibly seized various English factories. The French court at Loango (September, 1900) upheld this action and stated that the land did not belong to the natives and that, although the products were nominally native possessions, they could not alienate them to third persons without the authority of the *concessionnaire*. Moreover, went on the judgment, even the products were not the natives', because the native-reserves had not yet been delimited, and, until this was done, everything in the country belonged to the Companies! By this ingenious piece of logic, both natives and rival Europeans were deprived of any share in the products of the land.

Various appeal judgments further explained this curious interpretation of the law and of the Berlin Act. A judgment of the Libreville Appeal Court in 1901, for instance, held that, while a commercial monopoly was clearly illegal under the Berlin Act, the Companies were not

<sup>20</sup> J. Lefébure, *Le Régime des Concessions au Congo* (1904), p. 73.

<sup>21</sup> See Map No. 16 on page 339, or *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, 1/1/1900, p. 9.

affected by this limitation, because their functions were only agricultural and industrial! "There can be no question of a commercial monopoly," said this judgment, "because the rubber belongs to the *cessionnaire* Company, and not to the native who gathers it. The latter, in bringing produce to the Company, does not sell that produce, because he does not own it, but receives a bonus or salary as a remuneration for his services." As a climax, the Appeal judgment ended by nominally reversing the decisions of the lower Courts and allowing the English to trade anywhere, *except in the territory conceded!*<sup>22</sup> That is, practically nowhere! Trade for the English was over in the Nyanga district, although this was in the international free-trade zone, and was clearly impossible elsewhere. Other Companies followed suit in attacking them, and the year 1902 closed with the British expelled from the Congo and forbidden to trade either inside or outside of the free-trade zone.<sup>23</sup> But clearly France had gone too far in law and had erred grievously in admitting the element of physical force. The British Government took the matter up, and France, after receiving a strong Note, had to retreat, cede an area of 300 square kilometres to the aggrieved Companies, and pay a sum of 1½ million francs indemnity,—an enormous amount to the impoverished colony (1906–1907).<sup>24</sup>

Long before this troublesome issue was settled, however, the position of the French Companies had been vitally changed, chiefly because the less favourable results had forced themselves on public attention. Various Companies began to lose money, and the Congo at once became, not a reservoir from which riches could be drawn as fast as ships could take them away, but a desert which absorbed millions of francs without leaving the slightest trace. Montrozier was already speaking of the Companies as "the Panama of colonial affairs," and investors were disappointed when they learned that capital had to be sunk in the usual manner, instead of yielding immediate returns. They had expected to open a treasure-box: instead they had to make tropical farms, and the glamour parted with the delay.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> For the judgment of 1901, see Dareste, *Recueil Colonial*, 1902, p. 26; and for that of 1902, *L'Afrique Française*, Oct. 1902, p. 360, or Dareste, 1902, p. 56; 1903, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> The English point of view of this controversy is summarized in *West Africa*, 5/10/01; *Le Temps*, 7/1/02, or the documents in *L'Afrique Française*, Nov. 1901, p. 380. The French is best stated in first report of *L'Union Congolaise Française* (1906), Chap. 17. For the stages of the quarrel, see E. Morel, *The British Case in the French Congo* (1903), pp. 72, 127 *et seq.*, or *L'Afrique Française*, 1900, pp. 372, 396; 1901, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> Rouget (1906), *op. cit.*, p. 665 *et seq.*

<sup>25</sup> A summary of the controversy is in Captain Renard's booklet *La Colonisation au Congo Français* (1901) or *L'Afrique Française*, 1900, p. 253; 1901, p. 145 *et seq.*

The colony had scarcely left the exploration-stage when the Companies commenced their work. Much of the back-country had not seen a single European, and yet it was expected that development could at once take place. The normal course of events was clearly inverted; there was an attempt to have the *mise en valeur* precede, instead of follow, an inventory of the country's resources. The result was a good deal of waste effort. For instance, the lands held by many Companies were inundated for several months of every year, and the more distant concessions were practically isolated from the world of commerce,—yet nobody knew. Distances and marshes ruined the early Companies, and would have done so even had the direction and personnel been as efficient as possible. With aggravations due to the latter, the position simply became chaotic, a huge sink into which French capital was poured.<sup>26</sup>

By the end of 1903, at least a third of the actual and a fifth of the nominal capital was lost,—almost twelve million francs in all. And, although profits began to emerge in 1904, the Companies were still about two million francs in arrears at the close of 1906. By that time, nine of them had disappeared, twenty-one had a total deficit of more than nine million francs, and ten had aggregate profits of ten million, none of them being strikingly successful.<sup>27</sup> Apart from the introduction of so much capital to the country (and it is difficult to see how capital thus wasted could have helped the country very much), the Companies had not justified themselves in the first six years of their existence. Indeed, the only obvious advantages were a knowledge of the country and an organization of the rivers; and it can hardly be maintained that these were secured in the most economical fashion.

By 1905 the economic aspect of the matter had once more changed. It was now submerged beneath the humanitarian attacks, and it was here, rather than because of ineradicable economic faults, that the Companies met their doom. The red rubber of the Belgian Congo had become a byword in reforming circles, and scandals no less opprobrious had emerged in French territory. What prosperity there was had clearly been obtained by handing over the natives to a species of slavery and to abuses innumerable. French policy, never at any time particularly savoury in Algeria and New Caledonia, reached its nadir here. De Brazza, who had given the Congo to France, was despatched on a third mission in 1905 to see what France had done with his gift. The position the old explorer

<sup>26</sup> First report of *L'Union Congolaise Française* (1906), p. 4; Lorin in *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, 1908, p. 681.

<sup>27</sup> For yearly analysis of their operation, see Messimy's budget-report for 1909 or *Notre Œuvre Coloniale* (1910), p. 323, or second report of *L'Union Congolaise Française* (1910), p. 110.

found could not be disputed. Sick at heart that his vision of helping the natives should have led to such results, and with his beloved colony a stench in his nostrils rather than his pride, he died on the course of this expedition of inquiry, protesting against the iniquities of Congo administration.<sup>28</sup>

Government and Companies combined to bring about this situation, which was so castigated by de Brazza that his official report was never published,<sup>29</sup> but which his lieutenant, Challaye, thus summed up:—

“The Congo natives live in a regrettable situation. The *Concessionnaire* companies make them labour for a trifle, using menace or even violence to secure their services; and the Government, without rendering a single service, crushes them with taxes and *corvées*. Instead of being drawn towards the Europeans, as formerly, they doubt them and flee as far as possible. The routes habitually used by Europeans are almost denuded of villages, whereas formerly the natives used to cluster there. Regions described by the first explorers as inhabited and fertile have become deserts.”<sup>30</sup>

It is this frequently reappearing contrast between former prosperity and existing desolation that is the most striking feature about the report of the de Brazza mission. The Europeans had brutalized the natives and driven them back,—a negation of the Government’s duty in a backward native country.

The faults were clearly divided between Government and Companies, the two, as may be seen from the previously-quoted legal decisions, working in collaboration. Guillaïn, the Minister of the Colonies at the time the Companies were set up, had issued instructions definitely ordering Government officials to view Company-agents as “collaborators” and to afford them every possible aid,<sup>31</sup>—a mandate that was given a liberal interpretation. The natives had been dispossessed of most of their lands by the preliminary decrees; the delay in marking out the reserves deprived them of the rest. All products, whether on reserves or Company-land, were vested in the Companies, both by the Ministerial Instructions of Decrais (1901)<sup>32</sup> and subsequent legal decisions. All that the natives could claim, therefore, was payment for their labour in collecting the rubber for the Companies. Even this was deemed to be unwarranted, and the Companies insisted on their right of forced labour within their domains, just as the Government demanded *corvées*.

The result of this whittling-down of native rights was exploitation,

<sup>28</sup> *L’Afrique Française*, Sept. 1905, p. 322.

<sup>29</sup> His last letter is in *Temps*, 27/9/05; but a full account of his findings is in his lieutenant’s valuable work, F. Challaye’s *Le Congo français* (1909).

<sup>30</sup> F. Challaye (1909), *op. cit.*, p. 232.

<sup>31</sup> Ministerial instructions of 24/5/99.

<sup>32</sup> In full in Morel (1903), *op. cit.*, p. 291.

the evidence afforded by numerous court-cases and the de Brazza mission being beyond cavil. The Companies, utilizing the clause in their concessions allowing them to keep order, instituted bodies of armed regional-guards, largely lent by the State or composed of Belgian deserters; and as one Company told its agents, "under the cover of legitimate defence, you can do all that is necessary for the Company's interests." Another circular termed the agents "*pirates au petit pied*," another referred to "that jewel which may be termed the Maxim" in dealing with native chiefs.<sup>33</sup> Hence came the Kongobouka trial (1908) where two native agents were convicted for shooting hostages, but the Europeans concerned were acquitted because they urged the Company's orders as justification! Hence, too, came the frequent revolts of the natives; for instance, at Gabun, in the Sangha region on the Ubangui, and on the Upper N'Gounie, the latter necessitating five relief-columns.<sup>34</sup> The de Brazza mission found certain Bondjo tribes who had been in revolt for upwards of two years, because the agents had raided the women and forced the men to work. It was a common procedure to build camps for women "hostages" and keep them there until the men performed certain tasks; and it is needless to add that abuses indescribable accompanied this system. Even on the well-managed concessions, revolts broke out, as with the Bidigris on the Upper Shari in 1904. So the dismal tale went on—hostage-camps, forced labour, revolts; until it was difficult to ascertain whether the old slave-trading conditions had been any worse than the new uncertainty and degradation of existence. Most pitiful of all was the depopulation entailed by the abuses. Right through the northern regions, where Gentil had found "immense plantations of millet and manioc" and abundance and prosperity everywhere, the last de Brazza mission encountered desolation,—"no more villages and scarcely any huts round the posts; no more plantations; the carriers do not know where to procure the least nourishment. Everywhere is desert and famine."<sup>35</sup> From this point of view, slavery was the agency of the Companies, and depopulation the result.

But the Government, with its taxes and *corvées*, played a similar part in these years. They not only failed to stop the abuses, but actually encouraged them. For instance, an official circular of 1901 provided for "hostage-camps" for the women and children, if the men would not work. The most obvious abuse on the Government's part was in connection with portage. The only means of transport between the Ubangui and

<sup>33</sup> Respectively in *Revue Indigène*, 29/2/08, and *Temps*, 30/6/05, 8/7/95, quoted by Challaye, p. 190 and note.

<sup>34</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, 1902, pp. 182, 361.

<sup>35</sup> Challaye (1909), *op. cit.*, pp. 92, 84.

the newly opened-up Chad was by man-back, and all the food and supplies for the army of occupation had to go up this way. At first the porters were neither paid nor fed by the Government, and so were "raised" by black regional-guards. This "raising" and the concentration in "hostage-camps" and excessive portorage did not leave sufficient time for the plantations, and so famine and depopulation stalked in the wake of the Government policy, too.

Read in cold print, the abuses seem indescribable, so unreal as to be almost bizarre; yet their existence was undoubted. The *cause célèbre* of 1905, the Toqué-Gaud *affaire*, drew attention to them and awakened French public opinion to the state of the Congo. This trial attracted more attention in France than any trial since Dreyfus, the more so because the country seemed ripe for one of those *furors* of emotional indignation which periodically break out in France. Toqué and Gaud were young officials in the Upper Chari, and their principal duty was to find carriers to the Chad. Toqué, a boy of twenty-four, had to produce 3,000 carriers a month, or the Chad troops would starve. How he obtained them was unimportant as long as they were there. He found established a system of slavery, regular raids, hostage-camps for the women, and terrible treatment of captives in gaol. The new-comers simply carried on the existing system; and no comment is necessary when it is known that they were condemned for shooting alleged delinquents at will, blowing-up natives with dynamite and a shameless disregard of native life in general. "It was a general massacre, in order to keep up the service," Toqué admitted. But, as the Brazzaville trial showed, such abuses were by no means local or due to the individuals concerned: they were the order of the day in the Congo, and it was the general administration that was at fault. As Toqué protested, "it was the negation of all administration" and positively necessitated atrocities, especially in a country where the bush-nostalgia, that dreadful enervation that assails Europeans under the general climatic conditions, already reduced restraint to a low level.<sup>36</sup>

A kindred abuse was in making advancement depend on the amount of taxes raised from the natives, as this extended all over the Congo the abuses that portorage had entailed in the north. The case of Mongoumba, revealed by the de Brazza mission, showed what this system meant. Here, in 1904, an official, receiving the Government circular that his tax-receipts would determine his promotion, determined on a raid by his black auxiliaries. He accordingly seized sixty-eight native women and placed them in a windowless hut, where forty-seven of them

<sup>36</sup> G. Toqué, *Les Massacres du Congo* (1907), especially p. 92 *et seq.*, for details. This is one of the most striking documents in French colonial history. See Challaye, pp. 108-138, for a vivid account of the trial and the state of public opinion.

died ! The subsequent inquiry broke down because of the difficulty of obtaining evidence : the administrator was promoted !<sup>37</sup>

Nor were these instances isolated abuses due to individual perversion. Inquiries and trials showed that they were accepted as part of everyday administration up to the Clémentel reforms of 1906. It was only where proved murder was involved that inquiries were held, and it was the difficulty of proof under such conditions that safeguarded the officials. The general attitude, even of the Brazzaville residents at the Toqué-Gaud trial, was that punishments of officials were sacrifices of individuals to inapplicable humanitarian codes and ill-advised measures. A general deterioration of moral fibre had been produced by the prevalence of such standards, and the native policy of the Congo up to 1906 remains the gravest blot on France's colonial efforts.

The combination of such economic weaknesses and native scandals led to a revision of the entire situation, especially because the moral self-flagellation of France in 1905-1906 was so extreme in its nature. For the moment, it was the most emphasized issue in French life, the excitement recalling the Dreyfus and Panama scandals. This culminated in a lively debate in the French Parliament in February, 1906, the result being Clémentel's decree of February 22.<sup>38</sup> This decree aimed at a complete revision of the Congo *régime*, especially at the elimination of those tendencies that were obviously ill-advised or inhuman. France was insisting, bush-nostalgia to the contrary, that conduct in the Congo should be subject to the same judgments as elsewhere.

The decree set out by eliminating native abuses in so far as it admitted them. There was a distinct reaction against the system which Governor Decrais had inaugurated in 1900, of cutting down expenses so much that no credits were asked for.<sup>39</sup> The immediate results of that policy had been an over-great aggregation of power in the hands of junior officials and a spread of *corvées* and native raids. All of this, said Clémentel, had to go, because it neglected the basic principle of native government, —that the administrator had obligations towards his charges. But if this was evil, what was there to say about Gentil's policy of making the Companies farmers of the taxes, the State receiving its due and asking no questions ? Gentil had even issued a famous circular making tax-collection the principal care of administration. The system was that the natives paid rubber to the Companies, and the Companies paid the Government in cash,—a system open to innumerable abuses even where

<sup>37</sup> Challaye (1909), *op. cit.*, pp. 102, 103.

<sup>38</sup> Clémentel and Hérisse in *Journal Officiel*, Depts., 22/2/06. See the general debate in *Journal Officiel*, 20-22/2/06.

<sup>39</sup> Second report of *L'Union Congolaise Française* (1909), pp. 15, 16.

the ordinary criteria of administration were in force, but as applied to Congo conditions, an amazing evidence of ignorance or indifference on the part of the Government. The Clémentel instructions therefore specifically said that tax-collecting "should no longer be the principal care of the administration," and forbade any indirect collection of taxes through unofficial agencies. At the same time, Clémentel declared against portage and for the institution of a corps of labour-volunteers from the coastal districts, but this was a theoretical solution unsuitable for the actual conditions. Here, the reorganization stopped as far as the natives were concerned. The truth was that, despite the popular uproar, the primary emphasis of the reforms of 1906 was to diminish the hold of the Companies as a preliminary to other reforms, rather than to introduce root-and-branch reforms then and there.<sup>40</sup>

Their primary aim was to try to restore the State's authority in controlling Congo affairs. But the State could do little at this juncture, because of the terms of its contract with the Companies. The evil had been wrought by the decrees of 1899 which gave the Companies so great power. The State had really abnegated its authority by an unwise devolution of power, and all that it could do, now that the mistake was realized, was to call a halt and prevent any extension of an undesirable position. In addition, if its resources on the spot allowed such a procedure, it could harass the Companies by insisting on a minute performance of all their obligations. The speakers in the debate in the Deputies were strongly in favour of such a course, urging the expropriation of such Companies as had not carried out their contract. There was one general clause, for instance, providing for default if the natives were harmed, and other clauses made the establishment of plantations and the replanting of rubber-vines compulsory.

Beyond insisting on the letter of the agreement, the Government could do nothing in 1906, as the legal advisers of the Companies had adequately looked after their interests. Clémentel's decree, in view of this situation, could only threaten them with vague punishments, and even then, only for *future* delinquencies. The Government did not feel itself strong enough to insist on courses it deemed desirable. For example, it wanted to make the Companies pay the natives in money instead of kind, and it wanted to let in rival traders because the concessions were not for "commercial" purposes: but, in the actual decree of February, 1906, it limited itself to a mere platonic expression of opinion in favour of money-payments and took no steps at all to prevent the Companies from illegally ousting free-traders. In a word, all that it did was to

<sup>40</sup> The decrees are in *Journal Officiel*, 14/2/06; the Clémentel Report is also in *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1906, p. 81.

sound a note of warning and bid the Companies go carefully. It rang down the curtain on the period of licence, but it did not institute the new *régime* of control and order. It showed a changed state of mind and hinted at the changes that would come in time, but that was all.<sup>41</sup>

The difficulty was that, however much the Government desired reforms, the time was not propitious for their introduction. The general trend, however, remained unmistakable. Messimy, in his report on the Colonial Budget in 1909, denounced the Companies as "a veritable negation of colonization,"<sup>42</sup> and there was a general agreement with the summing-up of the de Brazza mission, as expressed by Challaye:—

"The advantages of the system are more apparent than real, more temporary than lasting, and the disadvantages are many, grave, and permanent. From an international point of view, from an economic point of view, and from the point of view of native policy, this method of colonization is dangerous."<sup>43</sup>

In view of this attitude, the Government adopted the device outlined by Caillaux in the debates of 1906. He pointed out that, when the Germans had found the Cameroons concessions ill-advised, they adopted a policy of *cantonnement*, by which the Companies relinquished their rights over the original areas in return for increased privileges—fee-simple, for example, over a part. It was a *quid pro quo* policy, by which the Company obtained a realizable asset, and the Government re-obtained control over much of its domain. The point for France was that the moment had become favourable for such a compromise in 1907, because the recent prosperity of the Companies had been clouded by the fall in rubber-prices due to the American financial crisis. The Companies, dubiously afloat as they were, were now faced with ruin and were only too willing to restrict their sphere of operations, especially because they realized that the vast principalities which they had obtained in 1900 were far too large for purposes of exploitation.<sup>44</sup>

After a difficult negotiation, therefore, most of the Companies were induced to renounce their larger privileges and accept smaller grants, freed from irksome restraints. Agreements from 1910 onwards effected this in various cases, either by granting fee-simple or a more favourable form of lease over a portion of their lands. Some of the declining Gabun societies adopted the former device, and immediately gave up 5,910,000 hectares in return for 120,000 in full ownership and certain privileges.

<sup>41</sup> Challaye (1909), *op. cit.*, p. 204 note. Compare the limitations of Merlin's first reorganization (*L'Afrique Française*, 1909, p. 350).

<sup>42</sup> Report on the colonial-budget for 1909, p. 104.

<sup>43</sup> Challaye (1909), *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>44</sup> Second report of *L'Union Congolaise Française* (1909), p. 8; *L'Afrique Française*, March 1911, p. 109.

Others, in the Sangha-Ubangui region, united on a more efficient basis, but still with a lease. They surrendered their long-term lease and their right of general exploitation for a new ten-years' agreement, with a right of exploiting rubber alone, and even that only on an area ten times the size of the improved area. The eleven Companies concerned in this exchange formed one new combine, and were thus able to afford more safeguards and to introduce methods which would not sacrifice future security for transient advantages. Moreover, this agreement meant that 17 million hectares of land would return to the State in 1920, when it could be (and actually was) partly re-let on still stricter conditions. The fusion was particularly interesting in 1910, however, because the rise of the *Compagnie Forestière du Sangha-Ubangui*, with its capital of twelve million francs, marked a reversion of French policy to the idea of one large monopoly,—something on the lines of the traditional Chartered-Company form which the English used in Nigeria and West Africa and Rhodesia.<sup>45</sup>

In all, twenty Companies compromised with the Government on some basis or other. The result was that, instead of thirty-eight Companies having exclusive rights over 874,140 square kilometres as they had in 1899, hereafter there were a few Companies in the coastal and middle regions and one combine in the far interior. Clearly, the Government had gained, because, by giving increased rights over 3,800 square kilometres, it had secured the reversion of 300,000 square kilometres—an area which had doubled by 1923. Under the conditions, this payment was not unduly large for the original error of 1899, although how needless it was from the point of view of the country's development may be seen from the fact that much of the area finally given to the Companies remained in its virgin state. The hiatus between the promise and the achievement of the *régime* of 1899 could not be more marked, and, to the French colonial experts, large-scale Companies absolutely failed as an experiment in colonization. Moreover, they had damned the Congo.

What, then, can be said to be the result of the Company-experiment in the French Congo? It is clear that some advantages were obtained, although at every stage the question arises as to whether equivalent or even greater progress could have been obtained under other systems. In the first place, 59½ million francs were spent on the colony, and, even assuming most of this to have been without return, much went on those preliminary works that are so important in a new colony. Then, too, trade increased. The Companies went there in 1900, when the total commerce was only 13 million francs: after that, yearly, it amounted

<sup>45</sup> For details of exchanges, see Girault (1923), 2.2.136-139, or Bruel (1918), *op. cit.*, pp. 439-441.

to 17, 21, 24, 29, and 36 million francs, and this steady increase must be directly attributed to the Companies. On the other hand, the Messimy Budget Report of 1909 pointed out that the free colonies of French Guinea and Dahomey knew an almost equivalent increase in their early years. Moreover, it must be remembered that the great bulk of the Congo's exports were of rubber and ivory, and thus more in the nature of draining the country of its resources than a desirable development. Lastly, the Companies paid considerable amounts to the State in taxes and customs. Up to 1906, the State thus received 3½ million francs from their quit-rent and profit-tax, and, after that date, 360,000 francs a year from the former source alone,—a considerable aid to the Treasury of an impoverished colony.

Those are all the items on the credit-side. On the other page of the ledger, the evils accumulated,—economic, governmental, native, and even international. The greatest of these was the wide question of economic policy. The economic life-blood of the colony was being drained away, and the superficial prosperity of the early years was inevitably leading to future trouble. A colony so situated could not afford a profit from the first and at the same time build up a sound basis for its future. In this case, exploitation and development were irreconcilable instead of complementary, and the stagnation of the Congo since the Company-*régime* must be attributed directly to this cause. It was an “all-for-nothing” policy, and, by its very nature, precluded a healthy gradual development. It meant the jeopardizing of the whole future for temporary advantages.

The most striking evidence of this was in the fiasco about replanting. The original covenant had provided for the planting of 150 rubber-vines for every ton of raw rubber exported; but, as there was not the slightest degree of control, nothing was done until 1906, and then it was too late. In the Belgian Congo, even during the heyday of abuses, State supervision and rigorous punishments had led to the planting of 12½ million feet of rubber by 1905: whereas, in the French Congo, so far from any reclamation schemes, the rubber resources had largely, and, to a certain degree needlessly, been dissipated. The goose was killed for the eggs, and the natives were prevented neither from cutting down the trees to get the rubber more easily nor from coarsening the product by an injudicious mixture of plants. Added to the prevalent neglect of the replanting clauses, such a procedure meant a weakening of the Congo. The ivory had gone, the rubber was going, as the trade-decline after 1907 was proving so clearly. France was already meeting the bill for the feverish and anti-developmental excesses of the first few years. The colony, as a result of the waste of those resources which if husbanded

would have afforded a stand-by during the troublesome period of public works; was left isolated, with its patrimony largely gone, and no works done.

In every way, therefore, the Companies failed, although it is impossible to dogmatize on the question as to whether the failure was inherent in the system itself or arose only because of the weaknesses of its application. All in all, it can be said that they were a mistake and their method of application preposterous. Even the *Union Congolaise*, the syndicate formed to be an intermediary between the Companies and the State, held they were needless in the coastal regions, and that there commerce would have developed equally under a free-trade system; and it may be added that, in the far interior, there was no place for them, for public-works and general development had not proceeded far enough for this species of exploitation. The advantages could have been obtained in other ways and by a far less sacrifice, and without involving future bankruptcy. In all, the experiment was inconclusive in the matter of colonization by means of Companies. This was because the obvious and incomprehensible absence of any governmental checks meant not a co-operation of Government and Companies in developing the land, but a stepping-aside of the Government and a heedless disregard of developmental and social conditions. The scheme, however desirable in itself, did not receive a fair opportunity, because Company-colonization does not entail always, as it did here, an unquestioned and unrestrained liberty to plunder. As an experiment in colonial methods, the Congo Companies thus mean little, although given proper control, such a form of colonization, so different from Chartered Companies, may have marked a new stage in tropical colonization. Lacking this control, it came to mean only a blot on France's colonial record, and a cause, contributory if not the main one, of the stagnation of the Congo since that date.

### III. The Congo after the Companies

Since the Company-experiment, the history of the Congo has been, in Sarraut's words, "short and melancholy." The colony became the Cinderella of the French Empire, and everybody accepted this verdict, as fairy princes and this unpalatable province did not go well together. The colony's record has been one of consistent stagnation, and the Congo is the only French colony that still needs a large annual subsidy from the metropolis.

Development was stopped for a number of reasons. The climate and the savagery and dispersion of the natives were the basic causes. Then, after the scandals of 1905-1906, and the subsequent economic breakdown, the colony drifted. France thought so little of it that, in

1911, she ceded 270,000 square kilometres of it to Germany, in return for rights over Morocco. The Congo was relegated to obscurity, and was neglected by both public and Parliament. It was viewed with the mistrust afforded to a speculation gone wrong. France was so ashamed of the enthusiasm of 1899-1900 and so associated the Congo with gullibility that the very name was unpopular. The Congo meant a "white elephant" to investors, worked-out capital to the opposition, in Parliament, and a sink of iniquity to the humanitarians: and, before this array of misinterpretations, the voices of those who urged a quiet development of its tropical resources were not heard. Consequently, in the first sixteen years of establishment, France spent 350 million francs on Madagascar and 261 millions on West Africa, but only 66½ millions on the Congo, even in the period when the country was being denuded of its wild rubber; and there was a similar disparity with regard to the loans guaranteed by the State.

The stagnation is best reflected by the trade-figures, which showed nothing like the rapid increase so noticeable in the other French colonies. At representative dates, the totals were:—

	EXPORTS.	IMPORTS.
	(Millions of Francs.)	
1897 . . .	6·684	6. —de Brazza left.
1899 . . .	6·684	6·619—companies set up; Matadi railway.
1900-1905 (av.)	8·404	9·880—companies in operation.
1906-1910 „	12·518	15·823—period of company stability.
1911-1914 „	17·579	27·859—utilization of loan of 21 million frcs.
1913 . . .	21·181	36·645—peak-year.
1914 . . .	11·224	16·722—decline owing to war.
1914-1918 .	9·834	20·066—average of war-years.
1919 . . .	9·763	29·293—franc at 35 to £1.
1920 . . .	65·612	80·691—inflation of currency (franc at 50).
1921 . . .	41·254	21·359—post-war crisis, franc at 62·5 to £1.
1922 . . .	26·465	38·562— „ „ „ „ „ „
1924 . . .	47·5	42·1 — „ „ „ „ 88 „
	(Compare West Africa's 764·8 and 657·7 ; Madagascar's 259·0 and 387·5.)	

Taking into account the changing value of the franc and the imports for public works, the above table is distinctly unsatisfactory. The years between 1911 and 1914 were the only normal ones, and, save for the boom-year of 1920, the post-war period has seen not only quiescence but a positive decline.

The country produced nothing except rubber and timber; and of these, the first has been continually declining in the last twenty years, and the second is hindered by freight-considerations and the competition of West Africa. The rubber is still wild, and, as in other French colonies,

wild rubber finds it increasingly difficult to compete with the plantation-products of the Far East. In the Orient, there were no less than 13 million trees in 1906, the year when France realized the menace thus implied for the future development of her colonies, and the great majority of these *para*-rubber trees came into bearing in 1915.<sup>46</sup> Rubber in the Congo was clearly a declining factor: hence, the Europeans have created the palm-oil industry and turned with renewed zeal to the exploitation of the colony's lumber resources. The Congo is the most richly wooded of all the French colonies, although so great was the hold of the rubber-idea that the exports never went much beyond 5,000 tons to 1902. After that, they progressed to 60,000 tons by 1908 and 150,000 tons by 1913, although there has been a decline since that date, due to the lack of labour and the difficulty of communications. Owing to unwise exploitation in the peak-period and the devastating habits of the Pahouins, production now costs far more than in the first stages; and the pre-war prosperity has never been resumed, although the difficulties are incidental rather than permanent.

As an alternative, the palm-oil industry was promoted in the coastal districts of Gabun, and, in recent years, has vied with timber in being the second staple of the colony. An average of 8,000 tons of nuts and 400 tons of oil were exported, the industry still being in its initial stages and capable of a great expansion. Beyond these three staples—a practically moribund rubber-industry, a backward but reviving timber-trade, and a promising palm-oil industry,—the French Congo has no development. Iron is abundant, coal is known, and important copper deposits are worked on the Middle Congo, but all of these are secondary. Pasture, concentrated in the Sudan zone of the Chad, is important, but looks to Nigeria and the Egyptian Sudan for a market rather than south to the Congo federation. There is no industry, despite the adequate water-power, and a declining trade. In a word, despite its natural riches, the country is, to use the official French phrase, "quite undeveloped." A contrast with Madagascar and West Africa, both of which were established about the same time, shows the stagnation of the Congo,—a stagnation not marked by any hopeful feature.

This is largely due to the absence of public works and communications, so essential in a country as huge as this is, and with the interminable forest preventing easy natural transit between the interior and the coast. It is true that the colony has had two loans largely earmarked for this purpose (21 million francs in 1909 and 171 million francs in 1920); but these were insufficient and overlong delayed, so that by 1924, the colony had few roads and not a kilometre of railway, beyond a tiny

<sup>46</sup> In detail in second report of *L'Union Congolaise Française* (1909), p. 36.

mineral-line to evacuate the Mindouli copper.<sup>47</sup> It is an amazing tale of ineptitude and lost opportunities. For a long time, Brazzaville, the capital, could be reached only by the portage-route through the Mayombé forest and a hostile native region. Even in the next phase, the outlet of Congo produce depended on the Matadi-Leopoldville line, built by the Belgians in 1898. A foreign Power thus had a dagger at the throat of the French Congo and could terminate its economic life at will. All of the products of the Congo zone came to concentrate on Stanley Pool, the Belgian *rendezvous*, and France was at once reduced to the status of a customer instead of the owner and controller of the whole scheme. She was an economic satellite, only tolerated as long as her actions were not harmful to the Belgians. The economic history of the whole Congo basin, including, of course, the French colony, has been that of the Belgian railway. The position is the more incomprehensible, since there are at least two valleys in the French territory opening towards the Congo artery and affording a shorter and less difficult route than that followed by the Belgian line.

The trouble is that the goods can come by water only as far as Brazzaville, which is 400 kilometres inland. At that point, the river meets the mountain and communicates with the sea only by a series of cascades or rapids, which are perfectly useless for purposes of commerce. Without a railway, all of the Congo *hinterland* is not worth a sou if Belgium were to close its line; and the Power holding the railway unites the whole of Central Africa under its control. Everything is dominated by the economic bottle-neck of Stanley Pool, for there is no alternative outlet at present. The French therefore concentrated on securing a railway of their own and thus obtaining economic independence, for they realized that, without this, they would be the economic thralls of Belgium. With a characteristic Congolese nonchalance, they have spent four million francs on ten railway missions in the last forty years, the only result being to demonstrate time and again that such a coastal railway was within the bounds of possibility,—a fact that was quite obvious from the commencement. Finally, a convention of July, 1922, was made between the Government and a private Company, and the work started.<sup>48</sup>

As a result, public works in the Congo are still limited to this embryonic railway project and a few roads. There is no port worthy of the name, and travel in the interior is exactly as it was forty years ago. It is little wonder that, with a colony so neglected and so badly provided

<sup>47</sup> For the loans, see *Journal Officiel*, Deps., docts. parl., 1908, p. 364; 1909, Nos. 2212, 2268; *L'Afrique Française*, 1920, p. 291.

<sup>48</sup> For the various railway schemes, see Rouget, *L'Expansion Coloniale au Congo Française* (1906), p. 727 *et seq.*; Paulin (1924), *op. cit.*, pp. 64-68; *Renseignements Coloniaux*, 1912, p. 392.

with public works, economic development has been at a standstill. The French have taken much, in ivory and rubber and the more accessible timber; and have given nothing in return, except diseases that accelerated the already acute decimation of the natives, and a few unhealthy posts, and telegraph lines. The Congo was clearly a tragedy for the people and a collapse from a developmental point of view; and the whole of the blame can by no means be attributed to the conditions, difficult though these admittedly were.

#### NATIVE POLICY AFTER THE COMPANIES

The second group of problems confronting the French concerned the natives. This problem was closely related to that of economic development. In such a climate, development was rigidly circumscribed by the native labour-supplies available, and, unfortunately for France, the natives were both few and poor. They were lower than any natives the French encountered elsewhere, even than the Melanesians of New Caledonia.

The Census-return gave a total of 4,950,000 natives in 1911 and 2,821,981 in 1921, and, though a more accurate method of taking the census would in part account for the diminution, there can be no doubt that the population declined, and is declining, at a rapid rate. Added to the ordinary causes of native depopulation was the influence of several factors local to the Congo,—the abuses of the Company-*régime*, the resultant weakening of the racial stock, sleeping-sickness, and a peculiarly aggravated form of abortion.<sup>49</sup> There is a decline practically everywhere, especially with the coastal tribes, the riverine dwellers of the Upper Ubangui, and the autochthones of the forest. The two former were harmed by portage-requirements and by coming into contact with the evil phases of Europeanization, and the latter because they are only a dust of degraded mankind, living for cannibalism. Especially ominous is the spread of sleeping-sickness, which has for some years been spreading north past the river-tribes and even to the healthier Islamized zone. Of 23,590 natives examined in the Chad region in 1918-1919, for instance, 3,566 died before the next year was out, and lesser instances were not lacking.<sup>50</sup> The war against this scourge started only in 1906, and, despite the gain in the northern provinces, it is now evident that the matter is largely a financial one. But, even could this specific disease be eradicated or restricted, the greater evil would remain,—the disintegration of the native life brought about by an unregulated contact with the worst phases of French civilization.

<sup>49</sup> Report by Gohr in *Institut Colonial International. Compte Rendu*, 1921, p. 507.

<sup>50</sup> Paulin (1924), *op. cit.*, pp. 39, 40.

The wider significance of this depopulation is that it leaves the French labour-supply far below the needs even of the present embryonic stage of development. Everywhere there is a shortage. Even in the palmy days of rubber-gathering, 25,000 natives were needed permanently, yet nothing like this number was forthcoming. The coastal tribes were dwindling in numbers and the inlanders would not work without compulsion. All went well until 1903, when there was not the slightest restriction, and the natives could virtually be enslaved; but after that, the adverse opinion of France on this matter forced the problem to the front. It was at once evident that labour, on a supply-and-demand basis, would not offer quickly enough. The natives would not enlist for service, except in the more vigorous Moslem *enclaves* in the far interior, the Sultanates of Ubangui and the Upper-Sangha lands, for instance. Elsewhere, it was only the increased contact with civilization, and the new needs and desires thus engendered, that could procure recruits, the more so because the memories of the period of abuse remained clearly etched in native minds. It was evident that economic development could not mark time until the coquetry of the women and the demand of the men for salt and alcohol would cause the trickle of labour-recruits to become a steady stream. "They have no conception of assiduous or organized work," reported an investigator in 1900, and would not labour unless compelled to, in some form or other.<sup>51</sup>

Yet direct force was out of the question after the tumult of 1905, and similar objections applied to the proposition of serfdom or paid slavery. Clémentel's experiment of free enlistment failed, and even the device that Galliéni had tried in Madagascar, indentures or long-term labour-contracts, was inapplicable for various reasons.

Development demanded men, yet the men would not offer. Accordingly, the only alternative to a complete *impasse* was in some form of indirect compulsion or stimulus to labour. Here entered the concept of "social taxation,"—that is, taxation so assessed as to bring about social or economic change. Such taxation was an inducement to change more than anything else; and, although the French aims were at first financial and aimed at securing an adequate labour-supply rather than the development of the natives themselves, the taxes in the Congo were somewhat of this nature. It is not clear how far this was the result of accident or design, although the connection between taxation and inducement to labour was soon noticed. A head-tax was imposed in 1902 and raised in 1907, and, at the time of its introduction, Decrais, the Minister of the Colonies, specifically said that it was "the only means we possess

<sup>51</sup> Second report of *L'Union Congolaise Française* (1909), p. 56; Rouget (1906), *op. cit.*, pp. 671, 672.

of gradually inducing the natives to work." But the Companies were made the collectors, and, after 1905, received payment in kind: and it was not until the reforms of 1906 that the earlier standpoint was again reverted to.<sup>52</sup> Even then, environmental difficulties came into play, and only about a fifth of the population paid, even in 1911. The plan for using a socially directed taxation as a means of making the natives work had thus dwindled. The French had hoped that the tax would make the natives work and that, once having seen how wages would gratify their desires and how contact with Europeans increased those desires, they would keep on working. But this hope was not realized. The natives afforded no adequate source of labour-supply, and France had to face this fact. All that she could do was to stand aside and, by a decree of May, 1922, sanction free contracts for periods of up to two years, and limit abuses. Either direct or indirect stimuli to work were out of the question.<sup>53</sup>

Naturally, they did not give up without a struggle. Faced by what seemed an inevitable stultification, they considered alternative labour-supplies from all over the world. As early as 1900, proposals were made to bring in Senegalese or Kroomen; and gradually carpenters and coopers filtered in from Sierra Leone and Accra, tinworkers from Cabinda, plantation foremen from San Thomé, and labourers from the Kroo coast. But these immigrants filled the fringe-employments instead of solving the main problem of securing labourers for the rubber and timber industries. Moreover, Senegalese proved very expensive and were taxed on leaving their own colony, because West Africa had its own labour problem.

There was then a turn to Asia. A Commissioner-General of the Congo Union, or syndicate of Companies, declared that Asiatics were absolutely necessary for the development of the Congo, and drew up a detailed scheme for their introduction (1907). This was approved both by the Congo Union and by Governor Gentil, but unfortunately the developmental loan, on which the prosecution of the scheme depended, was postponed, and so the plan was stillborn.<sup>54</sup> A Sangha Company tried Cuban blacks, but met with failure. This was accounted for by special reasons and not by any fault of the negroes, so that there was a further plan to consider negroes from Louisiana. A greater emphasis was placed on Indian immigration, either from India itself or from the descendants of Indian coolies in the over-populated Maurice Island. All of these remained mere schemes, but all the time the labour crisis was

<sup>52</sup> See Report of Bobochin Mission of Inquiry into Native Taxation, in *L'Afrique Française*, Feb. 1906, p. 50.

<sup>53</sup> Clémentel's instructions to Gentil, 11/2/06, in *Journal Officiel*, 14/2/06. Cp. Challaye (1909), *op. cit.*, pp. 220-225.

<sup>54</sup> Second report of *L'Union Congolaise Française* (1909), pp. 63-66.

becoming intensified. The emigration of Congolese to foreign colonies in Africa was forbidden, but even then no natives would enlist, except the coastal Loangos, the Mayumbés, and the inlanders from the Upper Ubangui sultanates. The colony staggered on from year to year with no outside labour, and no hope of any change for the better either in the immediate or the remote future. Three million natives, even if healthy and willing, would in no sense avail for the development of a region five times the size of France, and were practically useless when they were sick in body and recalcitrant in mind.

Recently, however, the position of the natives has slightly improved, largely owing to hygienic reforms. The removal of the old uncertainty of existence has caused the progressive Pahouins to prosper. The administration claims that the universal semi-starvation of past periods no longer pertains and that at least half a million of the natives are perfectly nourished (there are three million in all!). The old unhealthy huts are being abandoned for rectangular new ones, and the village natives are turning to agriculture. By 1923 there were fifty million *ceara*-rubber trees round the villages, and cultivation was rapidly extending.<sup>55</sup> The future of the Congo seems to depend on a development of small native-plantations, on the model of the cocoa-groves of the Gold Coast and the Cameroons and the increasing peasant-proprietorship of Nigeria and French West Africa. The lesson of the Gold Coast, in particular, proves that this materially helps the colony and the Treasury, as well as the natives themselves; and Kenya has even demonstrated that such native activity increases rather than diminishes the supply of labour available for European plantation. It is the habit of work that counts. Indeed, the idea of peasant-proprietorship has been one of the most striking phases of modern colonial theory, and experience has shown with the West Africans, and even with certain tribes of the New Hebrides and New Guinea, that it can be applied to tribes at various stages of civilization, and even to Melanesians, who would seem to vie with the Yakomas of the Congo for the blue-ribbon of savagery. This embryonic development, necessitated by the decline of the wild-rubber industry and the dawn of the age of varied and intensive cultures in the Congo, certainly spells hope for the Congolese, and, if the experience of other native colonies round the African bend counts for anything, a reasonable prosperity for the State.

A further hopeful tendency is seen in the changed French attitude towards native institutions since about 1906. Before then, on the customary French plan, the emphasis had been on destruction, and native institutions were viewed as something rudely to be thrust aside before

<sup>55</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Nov. 1923, p. 604.

exploitation could begin. This trend was accentuated by the horrors of the unreformed *régime* and by the demoralizing "colonial amnesia" or moral insanity produced by the Congo environment. But the destruction was too realistic, and it needed no great imagination to see where the decimated and hopeless tribes of 1905 were tending.

Therefore, France stayed her hand, and, from the time of the Congo Commission in 1906, emphasized rehabilitation rather than destruction.<sup>56</sup> It was clear that the natives had to be made progressive tribesmen under native conditions instead of deracialized plantation-fodder. The plantation-idea died hard, it is true, but the force of facts, especially the hold of sleeping-sickness and the intensity of depopulation, left no alternative. As a result, an attempt was made to restore the vigour and vitality of native life. It was believed that this would once more produce a hopeful psychology among the natives, instead of that listless and acquiescent fatalism which enhanced the grip of the diseases, both old and new, and reduced native resistance to zero. In other words, the aim was to revive the old native environment as far as possible and to allow the native to live in a world with which he was familiar and whose codes he could understand. The evil features of native organization had to be shorn as far as possible, it is true, and the requisite changes in material existence made; but, over and above that, the balance was to be left native. There was a good deal of the theory of segregation about the new policy.

Thus, Clémentel organized justice on native models in 1906, somewhat on the lines of the compromise of West Africa and Madagascar. That is, the lesser courts were to be under native law, and the higher ones had to take into account custom and equity, with a minimum of formality and an emphasis on native codes at all stages. Local customs and traditions, if they did not openly conflict with the bases of French civilization, were to remain. The French part was simply to eradicate the remains of savagery and keep order. As Clémentel's instructions to Gentil read in 1906, "the principle of the separation of powers is unintelligible to them, and what they demand from authority is that it shall be strong and just. In the interests of our dominion, as well as those of the natives themselves, therefore, we must consider the institution of native jurisdictions."<sup>57</sup>

With this arrangement for native justice (and it must be remembered that justice includes practically all the functions of government and social regulation in such communities) went a practical scheme of education.

<sup>56</sup> See statements of policy by Gentil and Merlin in *L'Afrique Française*, 1906, p. 229, and 1909, p. 140.

<sup>57</sup> Clémentel's speech in *Journal Officiel*, 22/2/06; Rouget (1906), *op. cit.*, pp. 545, 546.

Clémentel specifically said that "education should be primarily professional and technical,"—that is, proportioned to the actual needs of the natives. The faults of an inapplicable and useless literary education were thus avoided, largely because the missionaries who supervised native education had emphasized the vocational aspect. The Government scheme was organized on these lines in April, 1911, and provided for two degrees of primary instruction and vocational education. Unfortunately, the general stagnation of the colony directly limited these efforts, the result being that only 2,800 children were being educated in 1926.

Despite these shortcomings in practice, the goal in native affairs has been clearly defined, and the three aspects (peasant-proprietorship, maintenance of native institutions, and vocational education) all fit in together for the regeneration of native life. The contrast in objectives and methods from the period of Company-exploitation is striking. The hostage-camps and the organized decimation of the tribes have given way to a policy of moderate economic advance and a tolerance of native life. In its duality, this very much resembles that "mixture of very realistic methods and quasi-mystical apostolate" which were said to characterize de Brazza's policy in the early days of the colony. But, even so, depopulation and economic backwardness are still the predominant notes in native life, and the pessimistic psychology they engender is the greatest obstacle in the way of any reform.

Stagnation continues to dominate Congo affairs. Since 1914, the colony, losing its rubber industries and with its timber-exploitation fluctuating and precarious, has been limping along, with the aid of metropolitan subsidies, and going from bad to worse. It is the only one of the African possessions to be in such a plight. And French colonial psychology was such that, the worse its position became, the less disposed they were to come to its aid, and the less kindly did they feel towards it. The French temperament prospers in the Madagascars and Indo-Chinas, but not in the conditions of Equatorial Africa, with its dismal record of failure. Sarraut, therefore, in trying to get a credit for the colony in 1923, had to fight the Houses.<sup>68</sup> They cared little if the Congo had a deficit of eight million francs,—indeed, they seemed to cling to an idea that the larger the deficits the greater the possibility of the colony dying of mere attrition and thus passing off their hands! The joint effect of the war and the pre-existing policy—what Sarraut called "the detestable system of concessions"—had combined to ruin the Congo. A new note was struck, however, when Merlin, a skilled colonial governor, turned away from the enfeebled people and the inaccessibility

<sup>68</sup> *Journal Officiel*, Senate, 30/3/23.

of the country, and spoke of its infinite resources and the possibility of starting afresh there with a greater "natural capital" than any other French colony possesses at present.<sup>59</sup> Its 30,000 square miles of tropical forest, its agricultural belt, and the pastoral resources of the Chad colony, —all offer a more certain, if a slower, exploitation than the wild-rubber of former days; and, when the Pointe Novie railway, which was started in 1921, reaches Brazzaville, the isolation of the interior and the dependence of the colony on Belgian communications will largely be removed.

#### THE LESSON OF THE CAMEROONS

This future is aided by the restoration of the territory ceded to Germany in 1911 and still more by the mandate over a portion of the ex-German Cameroons,—a region contiguous to the French Congo and which by 1922 had as much trade as all of the French colony. The acquisition of this new land was greatly desired by France, because it commands the communications with the western interior. "It is a rich though relatively sparsely peopled colony," reported the Fourneau Mission in 1918, "and is the key of our West Africa."<sup>60</sup> It is essentially a rich agricultural country, more immediately a plantation-land than the Congo, and consequently better able to stand alone. It has a forest zone which merely prolongs the coastal belt of the French Congo, but, as in the main colony, this is now passed over as ruined by the competition of rubber produced on plantations. This gives way to a transition belt of savannahs and plateaux as in the southern colony,—a zone equally lacking in articles of export, but which opens on to the real heart of the country, the pastoral Adamaoua and the rich volcanic lands going up to Mount Cameroon. The conditions of the French Congo thus find themselves duplicated, but with the advantages more immediately realizable and at present dependent only on communications and the port of Douala.<sup>61</sup>

Equally as important as the optimistic trade note afforded by the Cameroons is the vigorous native policy in force. When the French went there in 1920, the slave-trade still flourished and the natives were as listless as the Congolese had been in 1905. Hausa and Moslem *col-porteurs* raided almost openly, and Foulbés destroyed entire villages. In the centre and east, certain groups had never been submitted to European influence and were restless to the point of civil war. In brief, conditions seemed to be a mixture between the Madagascar of 1895 and

<sup>59</sup> E.g. in introduction to Bruel (1918), *op. cit.*, pp. vi-vii.

<sup>60</sup> *L'Afrique Française*, Jan.-Feb. 1919, pp. 9, 47.

<sup>61</sup> See report in *Journal Officiel*, 7/9/21, or article by Gaston-Joseph in *Colonies et Marine*, July-Aug. 1920, p. 454.

the Congo of 1905. The first French governor, Carde, changed all this, and introduced a series of reforms that showed how it was possible to transform the psychology and outlook of native races every bit as recalcitrant as the tribes France had to deal with in the Congo. By 1923 the last rebels had been subdued, native courts were themselves promulgating judgments against the slave-traders, and the wider question of the slave-states of the north had been attacked. Here, the problem, as in Madagascar and the Congo, was to institute "a policy of races,"—to raise certain tribes against the tyranny of their oppressors and to eradicate the innate psychology of submission. The Foulbés had set up states based on the slavery of the aborigines, much as the French Companies had done in the Congo, so that the two problems had a curious parallelism. The French scheme of 1920–1922 therefore aimed at organizing the indigenous natives, the Kirdis, against the invaders, and at inculcating ideas of independence by setting up a peasant proprietary.<sup>62</sup>

But this meant introducing the idea of private property, hitherto unknown with these races. Only the Bamiléké, because of the density of their population and the pressure of existence, had evolved a rudimentary property-system. The rest, as in the forest of the South-Camerouns, had no ownership. Carde's policy of changing slaves or serfs into peasant-proprietors naturally removes this. He has already eliminated slavery in the centre and the south, and reduced it in the north; and, even more suggestive for the future, he has familiarized many of the natives with the idea of personal property. The Boulous are quickly adopting it, because of the ownership of the new coconut-trees, and the Jaoundé have gone a step further in recognizing the idea of commercial property. Economic advancement is the best solvent of native communism and the most efficient agency in producing a changed psychology with the natives,—a psychology of hope and struggle and individualism.

The result is that the Camerouns are prospering and trade increasing, though it must be remembered that no small part of the credit is due to the mandate restrictions which provide for free trade. This means that Germany can take most of the exports and England most of the imports, so that the colony prospers, even if the French manufacturers do not. The Camerouns are thus trebly important. They are important in themselves as a flourishing colony: they are important as a natural adjunct giving a greater geographical unity to the French Congo: and they are important as an object-lesson to the French in their Congo lands. Carde has shown that France can succeed in solving a problem as grave as that of the Congo and under similar conditions. Indeed, if anything,

<sup>62</sup> Carde's first Report to the League of Nations on the Camerouns, 1923; *L'Afrique Française*, July, 1923, p. 327 *et seq.*

the conditions were worse, because while part of the Cameroons knew the serf-class of the Congo, the north had native-states frankly organized on a slave-basis, and these had virtually been eliminated from the Congo twenty years before. The problem in the Cameroons thus included both the past and present problems of the Congo. Yet it was solved by a joint use of Gallieni's method of the collaboration of races and the West African idea of transmuting native life through the economic progress of individual natives. At the same time, it showed that these results could be achieved without any large expenditure on communications and public-works, and with a buoyant trade-balance, even in the years of the world-crisis.

All of these trends were foils to the stagnation in the French Congo, and, as the conditions are racially and geographically similar, their pertinence to Congo evolution is beyond doubt. The events of Carde's rule in the Cameroons do much to dissipate the erroneous notions that the failure in the Congo was due either to the physical difficulties of the country or to the impossibility of France evolving a suitable policy there. Much of the Congo stagnation has been due to the idea that development is impossible without stupendous expenditures on public works, but, given the railway connecting Brazzaville with the coast, the Cameroons have shown that this is a misconception. Much, too, was caused by the lingering idea since the Toqué-Gaud *affaire*, that Frenchmen could not avail against the forest neurosis of the Equatorial lands, that this sapped their resilience and forbade an energetic policy, and that thus a *rapprochement* with the natives was out of the question. The Cameroons show that all of these firmly rooted ideas are due to an unjustified survival of the psychology of 1905, strengthened by the quite untrue reiterations of the "great-bush" school of novelists.

In a word, what Carde has shown in the Cameroons is that French policy in the Congo has been vitiated not by the Congo, not by inherent shortcomings of the French colonial officials, but by a general misconception of conditions and needs, and by an obsession on the part of Frenchmen at home. The root of the evil is thus psychological: the success of the Cameroons in so short a time and in the face of such grave obstacles is definite on this point, both as regards trade and native policy. It diagnoses the Congo disease for the first time and shows the imperative need of determining policy by the conditions of 1925, not by a lifeless and foregone pessimistic survival of the ideas of 1905. "The Cinderella of the French Empire," "the colonial Panama," "bush amnesia,"—all of these standpoints have strangled the Congo, especially when joined to a limitation of credits and thus a refusal even to give the land a chance to rehabilitate itself. The errors of the past are mani-

fest, but it is equally an error to let these past mistakes, vitiate future policy ; and it is the negation of the colonizing spirit simply to step aside and say that there is some impassable gap between the undoubted riches of the Congo and French colonial methods. It is as dissipating these views and as showing the future development of the Congo in protoplasm that the Cameroons are so important. Sarraut's programme of public works and Carde's transformation of the Cameroons thus bid fair to open a vista of hope for French Equatorial Africa, and at least to remove the peculiarly pessimistic psychology regarding Congo affairs. France has sought to solve the Congo problem by ignoring it, or by letting it drift. Now, she is adapting the newer method of transplanting Carde's experience, justified as it is by success, further south : and this original determination is the greatest step of all.









